M • A • R • V • E • L
VISION™
THE MARVEL FAN MAGAZINE
#13 JAN 1997 $1.50
Daredevil / Batman
Dan Chichester
Scott McDaniel
X-Men / WildC.A.T.s
Onslaught
Gwen Stacy
Luke Ross
Larry Hama
and a trip to a comic shop
McDaniel
LL&C
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HE'S AN UGLY HERO IN AN UGLY WORLD...
THAT'S WHY HE WEARS A MASK.
Monthly Mercenary Mayhem by
Joe Kelly & Ed McGuinnis
DEADPOOL
MARVEL COMICS
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Stan Lee Presents Marvel Vision #13 January 1997

Timothy Tuohy
Stick

Jim Brennan
Vito Incorvaia
Karen Page and Heather Glenn

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Keith Manzella
& Mel Sanchez
The Hand

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Benny Powell
Tom Rolston
Rob Samsel
Peter Sanderson
Bob Sodaro
& Polly Watson
Thugs

Bill Rosemann
Matt Murdock

Nancyann Volpe
Larry Shell
Black Widow and Stone

Deb Brust
Elektra

Bob Harras
Ben Urich

Jim (Ski) Sokolowski
Foggy Nelson

Shirrel Rhoades
J. Jonah Jameson

William Bevins, Jr.
CEO, Marvel Entertainment

David Schreff
President, Marvel Comics

Way back when I was a little kid, the first comic that I ever got was one of those Christmas issues of BATMAN AND ROBIN. I think the title was "Silent Night, Deadly Night." It told the story of a man who had just lost his job and had gone to kill his miserly old ex-boss in his lonely hilltop estate. Batman was being held prisoner in the erstwhile killer's dilapidated home, tied to a radiator. The man's young daughter, hungry and poorly dressed, watched over the Batman. But, of course, it was a Christmas issue and everything worked out. The old man had a heart attack but the father was redeemed when he had Batman take him to a hospital and he lived.

The first issue of DAREDEVIL that I read was the issue right after DD got trounced by the Hulk. In this issue, a weakened Daredevil was confronted with a startling revelation; Daily Bugle reporter and friend of Matt Murdock, Ben Urich, had figured out that DD and Matt were one and the same. What followed next was Roger McKenzie and Frank Miller's retelling of the origin of Daredevil. Now that's a first issue to pick up!

My first Halloween costume was: Batman.
(It was also my costume last year.)
My first complete comic run was Frank Miller's DAREDEVIL.
(MAN WITHOUT FEAR is my favorite work by John Romita Jr.)

Marvel and DC are again joining forces to bring you another crossover spectacular. In the tradition of Superman vs. Spider-Man, and Punisher vs. Batman, comes Daredevil/Batman. I'm really excited about this project. I briefly worked with writer Dan Chichester on the last issue of PINHEAD (a book people said was perfect for me, go figure) and penciler Scott McDaniel did the most amazing Time Slip with his rendition of Galactus in issue #10. I'm excited.

Oh, and just for good measure, if that wasn't enough, the X-Men and WildC.A.T.s are going to team up as well.

I'm done. TIM TUOHY

MARVEL VISION #12

COVER STORY

8) NEW YORK CITY'S MAN WITHOUT FEAR MEETS GOTHAM CITY'S DARK KNIGHT IN AN ALL-NEW MARVEL/DC CROSSOVER.

50) MARVEL'S X-MEN AND JIM LEE'S WILDC.A.T.S. FIGHTING TOGETHER. ON THE SAME SIDE? MAYBE. MAYBE NOT.

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VISION INSIGHTS

Write to: Marvel Vision Insights c/o Marvel Comics 387 Park Ave. South New York NY 10016 Or E-Mail to: TIMM2E@aol.com.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I'm just writing to you to tell you how great this magazine of yours is. This is by far the best comic related magazine out there. Only WIZARD can compete with you guys.

I especially enjoyed MARVEL'S SILLIEST MOMENTS in issue #10. I never knew Spider-Man faced a villain as silly as the Hypno Hustler. It was very funny. I also like MARVEL TIME SLIP. I thought Galactus looked really cool.

Keep up the good work and the cheap price.

Allen Napier
HC69 Box 400
Arjay, KY 40902

Thanks for the compliments, Allen. In a field that includes other books such as FAN and COMBO, having it whittled down to just two books, WIZARD and VISION is an honor.

Dear INSIGHTS,

This magazine continues to rock! At first I only started to buy VISION because I thought it was simply the new magazine which previews Marvel's upcoming comics, from which I would make my list for my local comic shop. But as we all know, and as I soon discovered, this mag contains much more than that. It's all those cool columns and interviews which are now the main thing I look forward to each month. And best of all, it's Marvel.

Now on to business. I have heard that starting near the end of 1996 and during the course of 1997 Marvel plans to launch some new titles, about ten in total. This is an excellent move. Far too many of Marvel's titles have been canceled over the past couple of years, so it only seems fair that Marvel refill that gap. I hope that some of these new titles will, possibly, be a relaunch of a previously, canceled series. They seem to work these days. But Dr. Strange and the New Warriors definitely deserve their own monthly series again. Nonetheless, it will be exciting to see what actually does come out and is something to look forward to in the foreseeable future.

Another thing I would like to talk about is the Ultraverse. What happened to it? Only two titles remain. If there aren't any more titles that will join these two in the Ultraverse, why not bring the two titles over to the Marvel Universe? I mean, they're already listed with the other Marvel titles anyway, and it seems odd that these two titles are another Universe. Moving them over would also prevent these books from possibly getting canceled as well. They would sell much better under the Marvel name and logo. And I also believe that the character Prime can turn out to be a big icon hero for Marvel. Ultraforce is a team name that has a lot of potential as well. So think about it.

Well, that's it for now. I'll let the other writers comment on how good Time Slip was. Keep up the Insightful work.

Mike Facciolo
92 Fieldside Dr.
Scarborough, Ontario
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Marvel will be adding new titles in '97 and I for one am really happy to hear it. I've watched the Marvel line shrink dramatically with a reliance on the X-Titles to carry everything. Be on the look out for an explosion of fresh and exciting new titles as well as characters that haven't been seen in a while.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I've been a Marvel fan for years now and I've been reading Marvel VISION from the beginning. As a diehard Marvel fan, this is what I've been waiting years for. A magazine devoted to Marvel and only Marvel, and at a reasonable price. So with issue #10 I thought it might be time to give my opinion about your magazine. I'll do it in one word, outstanding!

After some problems in the early issues, the magazine now has an excellent look. It reads easy and the colors and computer effects really are a pleasure for the eye. All this at an incredibly low price.

A cool letters page; at least you guys stay objective and not only publish positive letters. And it will be even cooler if you publish my letter. Continue the excellent interviews. Here are some propositions: Stan "the Man" Lee and Ian Churchill.

The regular departments are excellent: The Daily Bugle, Marvel Chronicles, Beast Files, and especially, Time Slip. I especially enjoy Time Slip because it shows the classic Marvel characters by artists you don't often encounter in Marvel books. Thanks for the Overpower Checklist. By the way, when is there going to be a new expansion set? Are there any plans for a second edition of the first set, because I still didn't manage to get that Wolverine card? There's only one thing I miss in your great magazine, posters and trading cards. In the first issue you promised us more posters, but since then I haven't seen any.

Erwin Knop
Driehofveldenlaan 1
1700 Sint-Martens-Bodegem
Belgium

Thanks for staying with us through those "growing pains," Erwin. It took awhile for the VISION crew to settle into a format that was pleasing to everyone who reads the book. We'll still be doing some fine tuning so expect better things from, VISION.

I'm not sure about a new Marvel expansion set for OverPower but if one is scheduled for future release, VISION will let you know.

Dear INSIGHTS,

As a longtime reader of Marvel Comics I have to tell you how refreshing it is to have a new voice of reason out there to listen to. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Now I must address the current Heroes Reborn trend with a great deal of anger and hurt. I have been a loyal zombie of Marvel for over twenty years and never before have I felt so betrayed by my second family. Always before, whenever Marvel produced a special event there was a basic element of the books involved that remained consistent. For example, during "Secret Wars" much was changed but the heroes returned more or less intact. This is very important to us, the faithful readers, and I had thought you realized that. What keeps me shelling out my money every month is the fact that I know the characters, I can relate to them. Now, I only read one of the four affected titles, but even so, it's not too appetizing for me to wait a year to see Reed, Sue, Ben, and Johnny again. First of all, there are gaping loose ends to tie up in the

current storyline and second, why would I want to buy a new book existing in a whole other continuity? If I were a subscriber, I would be very upset. What you're telling us is, "Oh, sorry, we're canceling your book in mid-subscription, but here's an all new series we're sure you'll enjoy." Thanks for nothing.

From my standpoint, I see a lot of people being stabbed in the back. The creative teams are losing their books, and we are losing our monthly fix. Surely there could be another way? Couldn't Liefeld and Lee have been given a limited series or four, leaving the key books alone? That would have been logical in my book. Besides, didn't Marvel learn from the tremendous flop that was the AGE OF APOCALYPSE?

Sadly, it appears that it truly is all about money. I have defended Marvel for years, but it appears that they really don't care about the readers.

And where is Stan Lee through all this? The one man who cares about the characters appears to have been reduced to a figurehead for the Marvel Money Machine.

Also, I am very upset at the way this has been handled. We were never even told how long the changes would be in effect. Has Marvel not even the common courtesy to release some details?

Tim, I'm sorry to dump on you like this, but you're my last hope. I need you to set me straight about this whole mess once and for all.

Jason Maisonet
112 2nd Ave.
Verdun, PQ
Canada

Don't be sorry about "dumping" this on me. One of the things that I've tried my hardest with this letters page, is to provide a truthful and honest reply to your questions and concerns about Marvel. A company that I and most of you out there have grown up with.

Even though the four "Heroes Reborn" books will be taking place in a pocket universe there are still going to be some chance instances where someone in either universe is going to realize that something is not right. The LeeFeld 'Verse is not going to be that isolated as was evidenced in the early pages of AVENGERS #1.

"Age of Apocalypse" was by no means a flop. It did very well financially and critically and is still an in-demand story subject.

Stan Lee is very supportive of any efforts to possibly improve on his characters. Check out his comments in issue #12.

These changes will be in effect for a period of one year. Your favorite characters haven't gone away, they're all still here.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Issue #10 of VISION was packed full of cool stuff, especially the Joe Maduriera interview and the exciting sneak preview of the Heroes Reborn. Okay, I've heard both sides of the argument for the Heroes Reborn. Some people are happy to have Lee and Liefeld back working on Marvel titles, while others think that Waid, Deodato, and Garney were doing a great job.

But the fact of the matter is that relaunching the titles from #1 will allow new readers to start collecting and increase sales.

I have some questions:

1) Which issues of MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS and EXCALIBUR did Joe Maduriera draw and in which issue of WIZARD was he interviewed?

2) Will you bring back the artist vs. artist section?

3) I recently bought a cool Onslaught poster drawn by Ian Churchill and was wondering why it didn't get a mention in VISION?

4) What happened to MARVEL RIOT #1, which came out in October 1995? I can't seem to find it anywhere.

5) I just finished reading Onslaught: Marvel Universe and I'm a little confused as to why all the heroes had to sacrifice themselves into Onslaught? I don't understand how this event will cause the Heroes Reborn comics. Did Franklin's power have something to do with it?

6) I read recently that Marvel is looking to bring out some new titles. How about a new Wolverine and Generation X?

Mike Dean
Address withheld by request

1) Joe Maduriera had his first work printed in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #92 and was interviewed in issue #49 of VISION's friendly rival, WIZARD.

Artist vs. Artist will be returning as soon as John Romita Sr. can find time in his incredibly busy schedule.

3) Oops.

4) What do you mean? It did come out. Your store might have sold out. Ask your retailer if he can get an issue from another store.

5) Possibly.

6) Honestly, do you really want another X-Title? There's a lot more to Marvel than just the X-Men!

Dear INSIGHTS,

As a long time supporter, stockholder and fan of Marvel Comics, I must ask a single question, why?

I know you canceled many titles this year but now you have canceled a title that means a lot to me, so I have to step forward. Why NEW WARRIORS?

NEW WARRIORS is and has always consistently been a good book about teenagers growing up, making hard choices and seeking the truth. And the reasons not to cancel it are endless. First, it is a teen book and it has been proven by others that teen books can be huge sellers. Second, every creative team to ever work on NW has been exceptional; any of those people could revive the book. And lastly, why cancel a book that has been selling consistently? You may beg to differ, but you should note that it has been ages since the NEW WARRIORS did not place in the WIZARD top 10 where it continuously outranks GHOST RIDER, PUNISHER and almost all the 99 cent books.

So I urge you to save this outstanding title and I urge the Legions of Warriors fans to write in as well. Thank you.

Ben Morse
21 Sagamore Rd.
Newton, MA 02161

Here, here. All of you fans of the New Warriors write in. I'll be sure to pass your letters on to Bob Harras.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I love your magazine, it is just as good as PREVIEWS or WIZARD, and it costs so much less. Each month I find myself waiting for the next issue. I have one question; in the order form it mentions a book called ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION, but this book is never mentioned again, why? Is this book really coming out? Or is it some typo?

I am glad that you have started to print the 99 cent books, even if they are $1.38 here in Canada. This shows a real concern for the industry. I am also glad to see Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld returning to Marvel, but I think their move has disrupted some things that were going good. For example, CAPTAIN AMERICA has gotten really good with Mark Waid and Ron Garney working on it. Another example is FANTASTIC FOUR. When I try to picture them all I see is Paul Ryan's

art. He's been penciling the FF for years, which I have a lot of respect for. It shows stability. But this isn't the only book that is having its art teams leave after many issues. Sal Buscema is leaving SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN after about ten years. Mark Bagley is leaving AMAZING SPIDER-MAN after some 60 issues. And last but not least, Andy Kubert is leaving X-MEN after about 40 issues. Once again, I'm not sure if these people were forced off these books or they wanted to leave, but either way you are making a big mistake.

I have heard rumors about your company adding many new titles to the Marvel Universe. Ka-Zar, Elektra, Quicksilver, Hercules and Abomination are just a few I heard of. These are all cool characters, but I don't think they deserve their own series. Maybe a mini-series, but not a monthly book. I know my opinion probably won't change your mind, so good luck. I think you guys are going in the wrong direction, though. You are the industry leader; you should set an example for other companies. Cut back on maybe a couple of X-Books and cut the Spider-Titles to two per month. DC might see you doing this and they might follow suit. I think more cutbacks are in order.

I also think your deluxe books have big mistake written all over them. They are a pretty good idea and the paper helps make the colors so much brighter. But I think you should still give your readers a choice of deluxe or non-deluxe like you did when they first started seeing print. Also the new 40 page format is a ripoff. Half of the extra pages are advertisements.

To finish this letter I would like to ask someone to explain how the Heroes Reborn is working because I'm totally confused.

Michael Conte
58A Roosevelt Dr.
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 6V4
Canada

ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION is coming in October. It was inadvertently left out of the solicit pages in Issue # 10. My apologies to all those involved with the book

One of Bob Harras's concerns when he took over as Editor in Chief was change. I too miss Paul Ryan but we did get two "Fantastic" issues from the amazing Carlos Pacheco. Sal has moved on to other endeavors as has Mr. Bagley. If you have a PC then check out his work on the Marvel Cyber Comic at AOL keyword:Marvel as well as the forthcoming Star Trek special, Mirror Mirror.

Andy and Adam Kubert are both leaving their books by their own decisions. They want to pursue different challenges.

You'd be surprised how much readers' opinions mean to us. If they didn't changes wouldn't be happening over in the Spider-Man books.

Just like VISION the forty-page format books have had some "growing pains" but keep reading and you'll see a much more diversified sampling of extra goodies.

Okay, this is the last time I'll explain "Heroes Reborn." In the final moments of the battle with Onslaught Reed Richards discovers a way to weaken the villain. Thor is the first to hurl himself into the entity and is followed by the rest of the non-mutant heroes. Now exactly what happens next is for the realm of imagination (i.e. if I give it away Harras will throw me into Onslaught): the heroes are transported into a pocket universe where they will experience different origin stories.

Dear Insights,

I've just started reading VISION since issue #7. It's great! I like it a lot better because it's Marvel related news and Marvel titles are the only ones I read. Right now my favorite titles are UNCANNY X-MEN, X-MEN, GEN X, and EXCALIBUR. I've just restarted reading comics since January. I'm fourteen now but the last comic I read before last January was when I was in the sixth grade reading a back issue of POWER PACK.

It's kind of cool to see Franklin Richards grow up since then. Now I really like seeing Joe Madureira's manga influenced style. But I do have a few questions. What other jobs are there for people who don't have much drawing talent besides writer?

In the GEN X movie there were characters I never heard of before like Carly and Kurt. Were they real members of Gen X at one time? Are there any plans or ideas for making an X-Men motion picture?

To your knowledge, are there going to be any comic book conventions planned in the Boston area any time soon?

Probably my favorite part of your magazine is the Beast Files, and the contests.

Diego
77 Oldham St.
Pembroke, MA 02359

There are two disciplines for people who may not excel in art or writing but they do require some basic art knowledge: letterers and colorists. Lettering was featured in issue #7 and coloring was most recently featured in issue #11.

Carly (Buff) and Kurt (Refrax) were indeed original creations just for the show.

I don't know about any conventions for the Boston area. If anyone has information regarding this please send it in, and I'll print it here.

Dear INSIGHTS,

this is my first letter to any comic company. I am a thirty-year-old collector who has been collecting since the age of five. I have a collection five thousand strong. Ninety percent being Marvel, with the other ten percent comprised of the other two. My knowledge on comics and characters and their histories is so vast that I often receive calls form people, retailers and friends about histories of characters, book numbers, and artists. Now that that's said, the reason for this letter.

I am very concerned about the upcoming Heroes Reborn storyline. One thing that I appreciated over the years is Marvel's loyalty to its characters' history. Granted, the affected titles needed some spring up, but the areas where they needed improving were not the origins, nor the history, but art and stories. Something that has been almost on track over the last year.

Not to take anything from Jim or Rob at all, but let's face it, Image Comics are extremely appealing visually, but lack a great deal in writing. To have these guys come in to revamp and update origins, in any universe, a pocket universe or otherwise, is a big mistake. A new direction or story arc would have been just fine. Once again these guys are talented and I like their work, but over the years I have witnessed many revamped characters and after the dust settles, artists and writers struggle to clean up and re-establish the characters back to their former glory.

I will support these books because I know the art will be fabulous and hopefully, I won't be disappointed storywise. In the future, if it ain't broke, don't fix it, just tune it up a little.

Jedrod Goode
288 Orange Rd.
Montclair, NJ 07042

One of the things that is best about the pocket universe concept is one that everyone keeps forgetting: IT'S NOT PERMANENT!!! One of the outcomes of the battle with Onslaught was that our heroes were transported to this place. They didn't do it. So whoever put them there put them there with an

environment that was familiar to the sender. What hopefully will happen when the heroes return is that, not how they became heroes but WHY they became heroes will be exemplified. Spider-Man said it best: "With great power must come great responsibility." Nothing more true could be said. These heroes chose to be just that, heroes and that's what Marvel is presenting again.

Dear Mr. Tuohy,

Okay, this is my first time writing to a magazine so bear with me as I stumble all over my feet. For years, I read WIZARD. I paid the ridiculous price, I read the ridiculous amount of pages, and I suffered through the ridiculous amount of non-Marvel stuff. Then, when VISION came out, I instantly declared to my comic dealer to stop putting aside all those WIZARD graphic novels, and get me VISION! I was practically jumping out my shoes. Finally, a cheap small, magazine made by Marvel. It would have all the information I needed, and it would be the first to have it! Accent on the would!

I was mostly interested in toy news for ToyBiz, and at first there were one or two articles that made my day. No new info but considering the season, there probably was no new info. But now, after eleven issues, I have yet to see even a consistent column for toys. And most of all, my dealer ran out of issue #5 which came out around Toy Fair, so it probably had that in it. I had to go back to WIZARD to get that. Now I'm not blaming you for that, I'm just asking for a column for toys, misc. products, models, and video games every month.

And I know that there is not information out that often, but that is why you generalize the column. You can call it something like "Overhead in the Aisles." And when there is no news, just review something like you did with the Ghost Rider toys.

If after trying your hardest, Mr. Tuohy, you still can't get a consistent column, then how about one that comes out when there is information? Surfing the net twice a day, I have learned more about upcoming toys than I ever though possible! Well, once I did, but that was before I started buying VISION (see beginning of letter). I mean, thanks to the net I have found out about the upcoming X-Men and Spider-Man Christmas assortments (including a Holocaust and Blade!), The Puzzle Zoo, Toys R' Us, and Wal-Mart special releases, and these has come mostly with pictures too! And what's worse is that WIZARD supposedly released most of this as well. You are the Marvel magazine; why aren't you releasing this information?

Will I go back to WIZARD? I doubt it. There are some perks to this book. There are certain features WIZARD will never have here. But to be the premiere Marvel Entertainment Incorporated magazine, you must encompass all. Comics, Toys, Cartoons, Movies, and yes an occasioal interview with a writer or artist. Well, that's my 2 cents. And if by saying that I will continue to collect VISION makes everything I said in this letter null and void, then so be it (Keyword:$$$.) So until Toy Biz goes bankrupt and Todd Toys picks up the Marvel license, Make Mine Marvelous!

David Klonsky
(Address withheld by request)

I hope that you enjoyed last issue's article on the ToyBiz Hulk assortment. One of the biggest problems in putting together this magazine is juggling the pages around so everything can fit. Other times it's hard to get pictures of some items but we're getting better. I hope you agree...Please agree. Bob is standing over my shoulder right now.

Dear Tim!

First of all I'd like to congratulate you on how you handled your panels at this year`s San Diego Comic Con. While at the HEROES REBORN Rob Liefeld and Jeph Loeb were in charge, I really liked the way you and Jim Krueger handled the VISION show.

One thing I forgot to ask you was about Marvel planning to continue the Masterwork Series. My friend and I visit every three years the San Diego Comic Con (long way here from Germany) and complete the series we like.

This year I completed my run on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, UNCANNY X-MEN and the AVENGERS. Although you can buy the comics with the Guide's price, it`s a very expensive way to complete your favorite series. I`d like Marvel to continue its Masterwork series (your distinguished competition continues their archive series with LSH Archives 6), especially those old Antman/Giantman & Wasp issues (remember them fighting the Hulk or the Human Top?) and of course continuing on Thor and Iron Man.

And one last thing about the ONSLAUGHT storyline. I really loved it, but I`d like to mention two things. First: Prof. Xavier and Magneto are both mutants. Was Onslaught also a mutant? Then the heroes should have picked up the Mimic in Siberia (last seen in the pages of X-Force) to gain Onslaught`s power and battle him. Or second: they could have picked up Leech of the Morlocks to cancel Onslaught`s powers. Would any of the above mentioned theories have worked?

I`m looking forward to meeting you again at the 1999 San Diego Comic Con and hope you stay enthusiastic till then.

Thorsten Schmidtke
Theodor-Heuss-Str. 8
70806 Kornwestheim
Germany
t.schmidtke@t-online.de

Glad you liked the VISION show, Thorsten. Can you believe that was the first time that I ever did anything like that? I was scared spitless.

Not bad on the theories on how to defeat Onslaught. My own ideas on that are: Onslaught was so powerful at that point Mimic might have been killed outright by all that power in his already haggard state. Leech is with the Gen X group right now and I can't imagine the X-Men putting the very young Leech in danger.

1999 Comic Con, boy, are you planning ahead.

This month, Cody Blue Eagle, Steven A. Eighner, Travis Dorrbecker, David Pearson, Anthony Cheng, Mike Marrell, Matt Warner, Katara Mallory, Robert V. Backele, Jason Mittnight, Christopher Vanette, Justin Milcik, Rick Blair, James Gavin, Robert Moraes, Ryan Sarver, Matt Bib, Matthew Wheatley, Alex Hartsel(Happy Birthday!), Jason Crist, Julie Thio, Bill Tucciarone, Daryl Dyer, and Chuck Davis corresponded by way of snail-mail.

While, deflojo@ghg-corp.com, sorensen@mi.aau.dk , XopherTemp,JezzJedi, mjkuhns@iastate.edu, wrm@ tld1.tld.net , cmccltr@ix. netcom.com,cwbower @selway.umt.edu, diabolic@match.org, jlpst46@pitt.eduXopherX, DnDCOMIC,MattM81, ST963055@PIP.CC. BRANDEIS.EDU and NPERCY@GINA.SCIENCE. ADELAIDE.EDU.AU, sent their comments and questions the electronic mail route.

Next month, more of your letters and some of your memories about Mark Gruenwald.

A CLASH OF DEFENDERS OF THE NIGHT: THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR AND THE DARK KNIGHT DETECTIVE COLLIDE IN NEW YORK CITY

DAREDEVIL & BATMAN

Comic fans have debated about the powers and skills of their favorite heroes since the dawn of the superhero age. Never was that more apparent than when the Marvel Universe and the DC Universe tangled in this year's monster crossover, VERSUS. While many fans got to see the matchups that they salivated about for years, perhaps the most obvious overlooked crossover of all was Daredevil versus Batman. That will change this December, when fans will get to see Daredevil and Batman match smarts and skills in DAREDEVIL/BATMAN.

According to longtime DAREDEVIL editor Ralph Macchio, the idea for the crossover has been kicking around the Marvel offices for a little more than two years. Macchio says that when the idea originally came up, Frank Miller was contacted about handling the creative chores. Macchio said it made sense because Miller "has had such a huge impact on both of the characters." Upon Miller's declining the job (due to deadline restraints from his own SIN CITY comic), Macchio, who was then editing the Daredevil title, immediately thought of Dan Chichester as the perfect choice to handle the writing duties for the crossover. Chichester had presided over DAREDEVIL as scripter for a number of years, most notably for the "Fall of Kingpin" and "Fall from Grace" storylines. It was during The "Fall from Grace" Story that Chichester collaborated with penciler Scott McDaniel. The duo, in Chichester's words, "clicked immediately." It was no surprise then when asked by Macchio who should handle the art assignment, Chichester suggested McDaniel. Having his hands in both characters' mythos, formerly as artist on DAREDEVIL, and presently as artist on DC's NIGHTWING, McDaniel said he "grabbed onto the chance to do this project with both hands!"

However, after the creative team was assembled, work on the crossover seemed to be put on the back burner, due to Chichester's and McDaniel's other creative commitments. According to Macchio, when the AMALGAM books started to take the crossover idea to a new level, he felt it "was time to get this project in high gear again, because on the heels of the well received AMALGAM books, we didn't want this to be another ho-hum, run-of-the-mill crossover." Another side effect that had to be taken into account due to the AMALGAM books was the issue of Access and the Access Door. According to Macchio, "That issue was nicely resolved by Denny (BATMAN editor O'Neil) and myself, by declaring the book an Elseworlds story, completely eliminating any continuity problems."

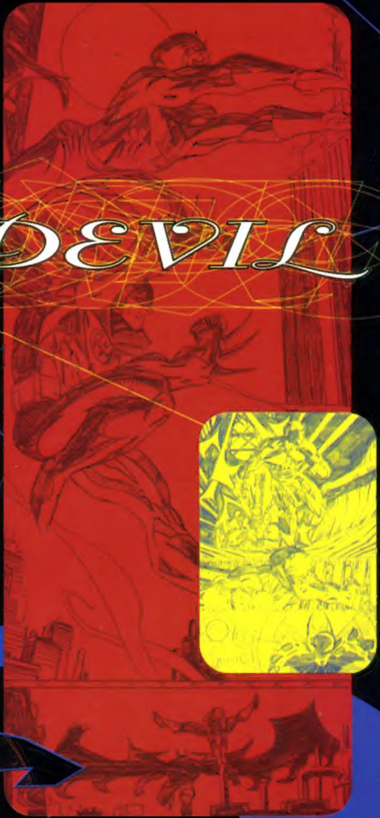
...perhaps the most obvious crossover of all was overlooked; Daredevil versus Batman.

According to Chichester, coming up with a satisfying story for this mammoth event "was a daunting task." He relates with a laugh that he "was very intimidated, and a couple of my early drafts reflected that," adding, "sometimes you just have to start on the bottom rung again." McDaniel also felt some trepidation concerning the project, stating that he was "at the same time very excited, but scared to death as well."

Chichester's bottom rung turned out to be the idea of duality that encompasses both Daredevil and Batman. In Chichester's mind the two villains in each character's mythos that embody the idea of duality were Two-Face and Mr. Hyde. Without tipping his entire hand, Chichester says that to get the two heroes

together, "Hyde and Two-Face have teamed up, after Two-Face has stolen some technological device from WayneTech. If used properly, it will make Two-Face both rich and powerful." After

"...it's more important in this book to drive home the differences between them."

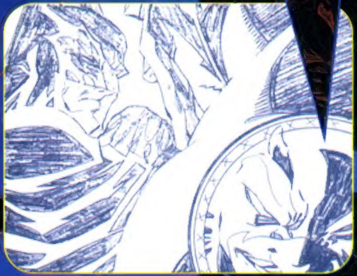


BATMAN & DAREDEVIL

pilfering the device, Two-Face heads to New York City to strike his deal with Hyde. This, of course, sends Batman to New York after Two-Face, who has left a trail of bodies in the wake of the robbery. When Batman does make it to the Big Apple, Daredevil is already in pursuit of the villains, and yes, fans, the two heroes collide. While fans have often seen the cliché crossover where both heroes fight before they realize that they're after the same goal, Chichester stresses this story won't go down that well trodden path. "They're after the same goal," states Chichester, "but they won't team up after the battle, because I hate that!" Editor Macchio adds, "There is a temptation not to have them fight, but as a reader myself, it's what I want to see." Macchio says that after they fight, Daredevil engages Batman in a little game of chicken, standing in front of the oncoming Batmobile. This confrontation, according to Macchio, "is to show Batman that Daredevil is indeed the 'Man without Fear,' and that New York is his city. Macchio adds, "This will have the two heroes appear on equal footing."

According to Chichester, Batman editor Denny O'Neil "was phenomenally supportive regarding the two major bits of business we wanted to do with the story." While he won't elaborate as to what the first bit of business is, only to say that "it's something Two-Face has never done in a comic before," he will divulge the second one. In another breakaway from the traditional crossover mold, Chichester has cooked up an angle that establishes Daredevil and Two-Face as having a past together. With both Matt Murdock (Daredevil's alter ego) and Harvey Dent (Two-Face's alter ego) both being lawyers, Chichester says that "the two will have known each other from law school, which is a key twist to the story." In his opinion, this twist helps "to raise this book a bit above the status quo crossovers." Not to be outdone, artist McDaniel has rendered Mr. Hyde in a style Chichester says is "really striking; it's incredible how Scott has represented him." McDaniel adds that "it's always fun to draw a guy with a really monstrous physique."

While the two creators acknowledge their apprehension when dealing with a project of such magnitude, they both say ultimately their relationship as creators in addition to their love of the characters involved made the project a dream come true. Chichester says that having worked together before, "the creative energy seems to flow between myself and Scott; it made the confidence level on this project quite high. McDaniel says, "It's Daredevil and Batman, two of the greatest characters ever created. How much better can it get than this?"



Echoing the sentiments of both creators, editor Macchio states, "It's been worth the wait to get this project off the ground." He adds, "The story works, and all the characters have their chance to shine; it'll be fun for everyone from the creators to especially the fans." Summing it all up succinctly, Macchio concludes, "The characters are a nice mix, and everyone will get to see exactly what they want to see."

–Rob Samsel

THE DAILY BUGLE

SPECIAL SUNDAY EDITION

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1996 / There's a bad moon a risin'; Tomorrow, sunny; Details, Pg. 23 — 50¢

CANDIDATE CREED ASSASINATED

By Ben Urich

ATLANTA (UPI)— In a shocking turn of events that will forever change the course of this nation's future, presidential candidate Graydon Creed was assassinated last night while giving a speech before 40,000 supporters. This shocking event, which was carried live on national television, dramatically altered what appeared to be an inevitable finish to this year's presidential election.

Creed, who was leading his nearest rival by some 29 points in the polls, was disintegrated by a power blast of mysterious origins.

Prior to the incident, Mystique, the erstwhile leader of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants and currently a member of the government-sanctioned mutant team X-Factor, attempted to assassinate Creed. She and her cohort Dominic Petros (a.k.a. Avalanche), who was also a member of the Brotherhood with Mystique, were foiled in their attempt by the remaining members of X-Factor. It is unclear whether the actual assassination was part of Mystique's plans or whether a second, unknown party carried out the act. Federal authorities refused to speculate whether there was any connection between the assassination and Mystique's actions.

CONTINUED IN X-FACTOR #130

FILE PHOTO

DEADPOOL IMPLICATED IN ANTARCTICA EXPLOSION

By Brian Brussels

EXCLUSIVE TO THE BUGLE—A massive explosion rocked the Michelangelo Gamma Research Facility in Antarctica yesterday, obliterating the complex and wiping out millions of dollars worth of equipment and research. The Michelangelo, a jointly sponsored project between the United States and Canada, had been established to safely investigate the presence of gamma radiation in the Earth's upper atmosphere. As this article went to press, there were no reports of any deaths. More significantly, State Department and Canadian officials report that no gamma radiation was released into the environment by the project's gamma core. The project was headed up by famed Canadian scientist and super hero Walter Langowski (a.k.a. Sasquatch of Alpha Flight).

Unidentified sources from inside Canada's Department H say that the notorious mercenary known as Deadpool may have been behind the Michelangelo Facility's destruction. Deadpool, known to world law enforcement officials as Wade Wilson, is on both the American and Canadian most wanted lists, as well as those of Interpol and many other world governments. No explanation has been given as to why Deadpool might have destroyed the installation, or even how. Given his mercenary background, the leading theory is that he had been hired by an unknown party to do so.

CONTINUED IN DEADPOOL #1

NEW SUPER-TEAM UNVEILED

ASSOCIATED PRESS

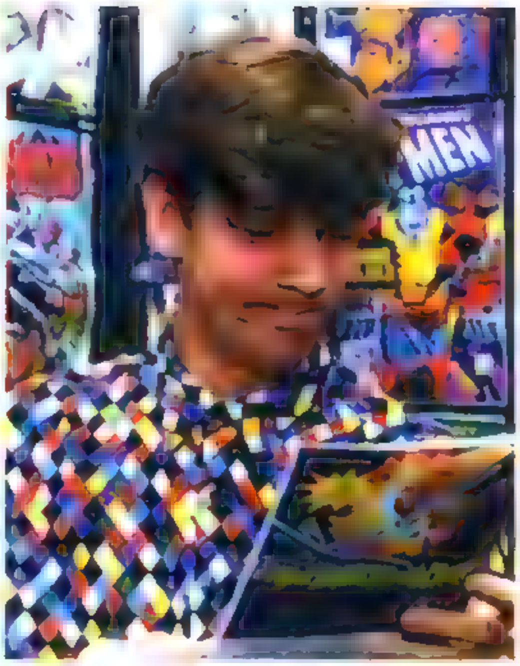
ARIZONA—The recently reduced super-hero population was suddenly and dramatically increased once more yesterday with the arrival of a new team of heroes, calling themselves the Thunderbolts. Comprised of six men and women, the Thunderbolts may very well be the biggest thing since the arrival of the Fantastic Four.

Strangely, none of these heroes have ever been seen before, inevitably creating an air of public unease. The team, comprised of Citizen V, Meteorite, Atlas, Techno, Songbird, and Mach 1, have no official or unofficial record, criminal or otherwise. "I respect and admire anyone who is willing to risk his or her life to help others," said bystander Jen Greenberg, "but there's something very disturbing to me about a bunch of super-folk we've never heard of just popping up out of nowhere and declaring they're going to help us."

Citizen V, the apparent leader of the team, promised, "We will do anything and everything to prove to the world that we are here to help. We cannot ever hope to fully live up to the wonderful legacy of the Avengers and Fantastic Four, but that doesn't mean we can't try our very best."

CONTINUED IN INCREDIBLE HULK #449

CREATORS '96 CONFERENCE



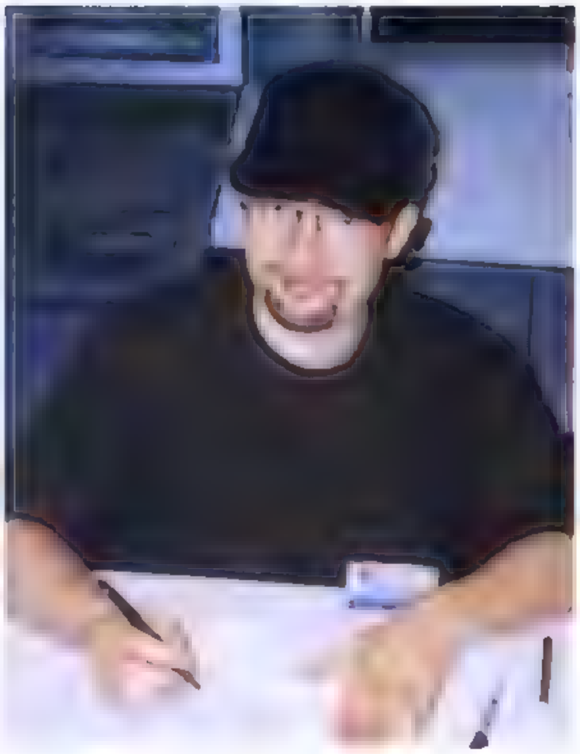
Did I write this? —Scott Lobdell

HOW I SPENT MY MARVEL CREATORS CONFERENCE

By Li'l Marky Bernardo

Tuesday, July 23rd through Friday, July 26th were days wherein a whole gaggle of Marvel's most talented creators gathered with Marvel's editorial staff for a few days of fun 'n' games, free food, socializing and, of course, intensive brainstorming sessions. The goal: coming up with exciting new projects for 1997. As Marvel's newest associate editor, I got the opportunity to take part in this year's big getaway; what follows are my impressions of the proceedings.

Howard Mackie is tall



Steve Skroce is sitting

Day One:

Well, 3:00 has rolled around in an even more hectic than usual Marvel workday; the bus is ready to take everyone out to Princeton, New Jersey for the first night of the 1996 Marvel Creators Conference and as usual, I'm running late! I make one last phone call to Tom Lyle (darn it, that PUNISHER cover sketch has to be just right before I go!), I find MARVEL VISION editor Tim Tuohy, and we both head out to the bus. After assuring Tim that yes, I do have my camera to take pictures at the conference, and that yes, it does have film — playing Peter Parker to his J. Jonah Jameson — and after Bob Harras has made sure at least four times that everyone that's supposed to be on the bus is indeed on the bus, we were off.

We arrived at the Harrison Conference Center in the early evening. After I'd greeted various of the assembled freelance creators at the cocktail hour, and traded a few really bad jokes with SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN writer Todd Dezago, we all sat down to a Cajun style buffet dinner, just what the doctor ordered for this die-hard spicy food aficionado! Later, the real business began. In a big meeting room, we were all treated to a first ever viewing (on a big screen, yet!) of the first Marvel Online Spider-Man comic! (As someone who toiled on that project in its early stages, it was especially gratifying to see it actually come to fruition!) Online Comics Editor Suzanne Gaffney-Beason spoke about other upcoming cybercomic projects, starting with one starring Wolverine! Then Marvel Software Editor Ben Raab took us through a tour of the all-new Marvel Online site. The room was filled with people practically salivating at the creative, promotional and fan interactive possibilities of this new exciting venue! Marvel Man About Town, Terry Stewart then informed everyone about the progress of Marvel Mania, the new chain of Marvel theme restaurants, the first of which is due to open in 1997! And leave it to Terry to bring everyone free t-shirts! Woo-hoo!! The chain of enthusiastic speakers continued.Though the speeches were occasionally long (and cut into our social time!) one thing was certain: there were lots of plans for Marvel to move onward and upward in 1997!

Day two:

Slept through breakfast, so it's grab a bagel and coffee before sitting down for the first actual all-creators meeting. The games were about to begin in earnest—literally! Chief Bob Harras, aided by his trusty co-conspirators Bobbie Chase, Suzanne Gaffney, and Mark Gruenwald, initiated a series of brain-straining intellectual exercises designed to get everyone thinking about the wide possibilities of the Marvel Universe and all the interesting connections between the characters. Then came the (d'ohh!!) "homework" for the day: a script from the soap opera "One Life to Live." Bob H. wanted us to read it to understand the long-term story planning involved in the writing of serial fiction. Well, this cuts into my free time this afternoon, I thought, but at least I can catch some rays by the pool while I read!

Later on, I sat down for dinner at the conference center's sumptuous restaurant and savored an absolutely heavenly filet mignon while discussing long-term story business with my PUNISHER writer, John Ostrander.

After dinner, discussion resumed about the Marvel Characters. What makes a good hero? What makes a good villain? What makes for just the right supporting cast? What should a good character's name say about him or her? The discussion began with another game: everyone was split into two lines and host Mark Gruenwald read off a letter of the alphabet. The person at the front of each line had ten seconds to name a Marvel character whose name began with that letter. Sounded easy at first — but the pressure of doing it in front of a whole crowd of one's peers eliminated a lot of the competition with surprising quickness (especially newcomers to Marvel like poor neo-ELEKTRA writer Peter Milligan!) The fierce competition came down to just two: yours truly and "Mr. Trivia" himself, Mark Waid! And ultimately, the erstwhile CAP scribe was stumped by the fifth or sixth go-'round on the letter "K!" I emerged from that bloody conflict as official Geek Boy of the conference!

Conference This! —Ralf Macchio

Mark Gruenwald and Karl Kesel discuss the universal aspects of dinner

The day was draining, but we were all starting to get energized about the Marvel Universe... and we were all more than ready for some late night unwinding at the hotel bar! I rounded out the wee hours of the evening by talking Spider-Man stuff with new AMAZING SPIDER-MAN artist Steve Skroce and shooting a few games of pool with Barbara Kesel. As I headed off to bed, I was cornered by William Messner-Loebs, who told me a charming tale of Native American torture on the American frontier — thanks for the bedtime story, Bill! (I'm glad he's writing comics and not Hallmark Cards!)

Fun 'n Games

Games 'n Fun

Day three:

The alarm said 8:00, so I knew there's no way I was making it to breakfast that day either. I headed straight for the free coffee, bagels and muffins for the second day in a row and got settled in. The day began with a video presentation: select clips from Friends, The X-Files, and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. Despite the obvious differences in genre and medium, the videos selected had a lot to demonstrate on the art of establishing characters, telling the story through actions, and building up conflict. After that, it was time for the aspiring thespians in the crowd to strut their stuff (such as it was), as we had dramatic readings of yesterday's soap opera script.

After the morning's discussions (which were only occasionally marred by an outbreak of foam dart gun battles — boy, that Mark Waid just doesn't take defeat well!), it was

Yes, Scott, you wrote that —Tom DeFalco

I packed a lunch. —Bob Harras

afternoon break time. Having no soap opera script to devour today, I opted for the wallyball games! (For those not in-the-know, wallyball is indoor volleyball played on a racquetball court wherein you can legally ricochet the ball off the side walls.) The people who showed up for this torturous match were myself, Mark Gruenwald, Barbara Kesel, Peter Milligan, Alan Davis, Mark Waid, Mark Paniccia, and Jim "Ski" Sokolowski. At one point in the tournament, we formed an "all-Mark" team, which didn't actually fare too well, but at least the talented Mr. Waid and I were finally on the same side!

After dinner, we filed into a room that was set up like the set of a talk show, and we soon found out why: it was time for an episode of the "Rick Jones" show, with class cut-up Scott Lobdell as Rick, the host, and "Heroes Reborn's" CAPTAIN AMERICA scribe Jeph Loeb as his Ed McMahon-like sidekick.

With various members of the assembled creators portraying characters in their books, the show was set up to provide the crowd with information about upcoming storylines. It went off — well, just as flawlessly as anything that had about five seconds of rehearsal time. The foam dart guns, needless to say, were deployed at several points during the presentation!

Now thoroughly relaxed, everyone was moved into a big circle, and the real meat-and-potatoes of the conference began. We'd talked about characters. We'd talked about storytelling. We'd talked about continuity, formats, interaction, and just about all the generalities. Now it was time to talk specifics. What did we all want to do with the Marvel Universe in 1997, and what characters did we want to do it with? Everyone had their moments to chime in; even those that had been pretty quiet up till then participated. Peter Milligan was uncommonly loquacious that evening, for example. (I still don't think that was coffee in that coffee cup of his...) We got into some good momentum that we hoped would remain when we resumed tomorrow morning.

Day four:

Oh, well. So I've missed breakfast every day at this thing. I'm not usually hungry early in the morning anyway. Besides, it's not every evening that I get to stay up till the wee hours, matching wits with some of the greats of the business, playing a version of the game "Taboo" based on Marvel characters. (Geek Boy shines again!) The morning meeting began with the same circle of creators discussing in earnest the same topics. And the great thing was that rather than losing momentum, the good night's sleep seemed to just get everyone's creative juices flowing even more! Concepts and ideas were kicked around that had just about everyone psyched, and the synergy between writers, editors, and artists was a joy to witness, and much more of one to actually be part of! Some of the ideas and characters discussed at the morning session: All-new back-up features for the 40-page comics. Millie the Model. Squadron Supreme. Weirdworld. Hercules. Nomad. Man-Thing. Black Widow. An all-new team featuring Power Man and Iron Fist. Shang-Chi. Ant-Man. Paladin. New spins on some of the more interesting characters from the New Universe. We left with a list of things to start developing, and Marveldom Assembled will hopefully be seeing the results come to fruition in 1997.

Steve Skroce and Tom DeFalco fight over the last Twinkie

It was now time for our last lunch before departure time (yep, we editorial types had to go back to the office for the second half of the day), and we made sure to get our fill. The bus ride back was much quieter than the ride out, due to the smaller crowd on this bus, and the noticeable lack of wacky Lobdell/Loeb road songs. So, drifting between sleep and wakefulness, and looking forward to a quiet evening watching an old movie with a friend, I reflected on how satisfying, how exciting, how downright *cool* it was to be even a small part of shaping the future of what Mark Gruenwald once called, "the most fascinating fictional universe ever created." What could be cooler than that? I'm not even all that upset about missing breakfast every day. Anyone want a shot at the Geek Boy belt?

Marvel Entertainment and QVC present

The QVC Marvel Comics Collectibles Hour

Tune In
October 29th
7:00 PM EST

Special guest appearance by
John Romita Sr

Check local listings for details

(Limited edition Spider-Man Christmas ornament shown)

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Beast Files

"[illegible] assays of bias, By [illegible] find directions out."
— Shakespeare: Hamlet

[illegible] of magnetism, maniacal [illegible] immortals, malevolent cosmic [illegible] invading alien forces. All of [illegible] more, the X-Men have faced [illegible] again. And through it all, [illegible] somehow managed to come out ahead of the game, [illegible] managing to turn the tide of the battle into a victory. Yet [illegible] foe the X-Men may never defeat... simple human prejudice.

[illegible] the years, this prejudice has worn many faces and many [illegible] Mutant Registration Act, Genoshan Extinction Agenda and [illegible] by the name Operation: Zero Tolerance.

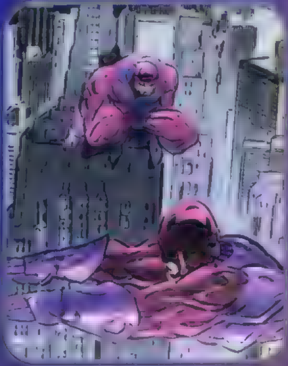
Operation: Zero Tolerance is, for the first time, a concerted effort [illegible] made by multiple global factions. With its international reach, we [illegible] begun to scratch the surface as to the identity of the players.

These two factions recently combined to form a larger, less openly militant group. This group's stated goal is simple: the eradication of the "mutant threat." Preying upon the fear, ignorance and insecurities of the American people, they continue to grow in popularity. It is through this organization that Graydon Creed has founded his platform for political power.

Graydon Creed, while not a mutant himself, is the son of the mutants Mystique and Sabretooth. It is likely that this alone is reason enough for his hatred of all things mutant. Graydon first founded the Friends of Humanity and is currently the popular candidate for President of the United States. What his followers would do if they knew his lineage, however, is anyone's guess.

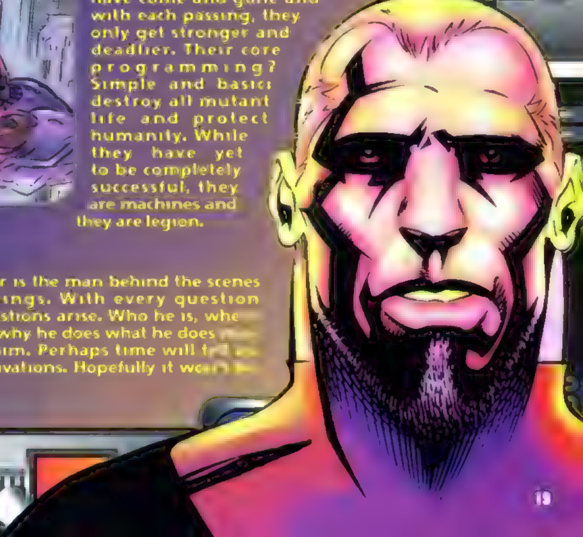
Senator Robert Kelly was foremost in breaking ground in the area of mutant regulations. Kelly was on the Council of Mutant Affairs and was instrumental in the creation of the Mutant Registration Act. Because of his stance on the "mutant problem," Kelly has himself become a target of numerous mutant attacks. However, even he sees the dangers presented by this new, growing movement. Thus, he has once again become a target of his "own kind."

The Trask name has long been associated with anti-mutant sent[illegible] Even as far back as the formation of the X-Men themselves, there wa[illegible] always a Trask to design a way to destroy mutant life. That legacy lives on. Whether it be through the use of human powered techno-armors or the ultimate Trask design—the Sentinels—mutants beware.



Mutant-hunting machines of immense size and power. Over the years, many makes and models have come and gone and with each passing, they only get stronger and deadlier. Their core programming? Simple and basic: destroy all mutant life and protect humanity. While they have yet to be completely successful, they are machines and they are legion.

This enigmatic player is the man behind the scenes pulling all the strings. With every question answered, more questions arise. Who he is, whe[illegible] he comes from, and why he does what he does [illegible] be known only to him. Perhaps time will t[illegible] more about his motivations. Hopefully it wo[illegible] too late.



Remember Gwen?

She's hot,

she's sexy,

she's dead!

The one

and only

Gwen Stacy,

Marvel's

posthumous

heroine!

by

Pat Jankiewicz

MEET GWEN STACY; SHE'S SMART, BLONDE AND BEAUTIFUL. SHE'S ALSO ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR CHARACTERS IN COMICS. RECENTLY, SHE PLAYED MAJOR ROLES IN **X-MEN UNIVERSE**, **SPIDER-MAN** AND EVEN THE ACCLAIMED LIMITED SERIES **MARVELS**. NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT ANY OF THIS EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT GWEN'S BEEN DEAD FOR 23 YEARS!

WHILE THIS SOUNDS MORE LIKE AN EC COMIC THAN A MARVEL ONE, GWEN OCCUPIES A UNIQUE PLACE IN MARVEL HISTORY. SHE HAD NO MUTANT ABILITIES, NO SUPER POWERS OR SECRET IDENTITY. SHE SIMPLY HAPPENED TO BE A NORMAL COLLEGE GIRL WHO WAS DATING PETER PARKER. WHAT IS IT THAT MADE HER SO COMPELLING THAT COMIC CREATORS WOULD USE HER IN STORYLINES WELL OVER TWO DECADES AFTER SHE WAS KILLED OFF? QUITE SIMPLY, DEATH HAPPENED.

GWEN STARTED OUT AS A FACE IN THE CROWD IN **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #31**. PETER STARTS COLLEGE AND MEETS HARRY OSBORN FOR THE FIRST TIME. WITH HIM IS GWEN, WHOM WE'RE TOLD WAS "THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF

"Standard High" and a good science student. From there, Gwen blossomed into a major character. Becoming Peter's girlfriend, she could do no wrong. Where Mary Jane Watson was flighty and sarcastic, Gwen was loyal and supportive. As Mary Jane was chasing the latest party or dance craze, Gwen stood by Peter. Even Stan Lee admits, "Gwen was so sweet, sugar wouldn't melt in her mouth!"

Unlike the mischievous Ms. Watson, Gwen was the perfect girlfriend. Sadly, nice girls finish last. In **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #121**, Gwen is murdered by the original Green Goblin. Her death propelled Spider-Man through anguish, grief and acceptance. Later, he fell in love with and subsequently married Mary Jane Watson.

Gwen's popularity seems to be due to the senseless way she died. The Green Goblin hurled her from the top of the George Washington Bridge, where she died of shock (and/or broken neck—we see it go "snap" in the panel where she falls). Because Spidey failed to save her, Gwen's death violated every conventional rule in comics. She and Peter weren't about to marry, so there was no need to kill her to keep Peter single. She never knew he was Spider-Man, and she wasn't a sidekick. In short, she was an innocent victim at the wrong place and wrong time. There was no reason for her to be murdered by the villain, which made it a shocking, senseless act.

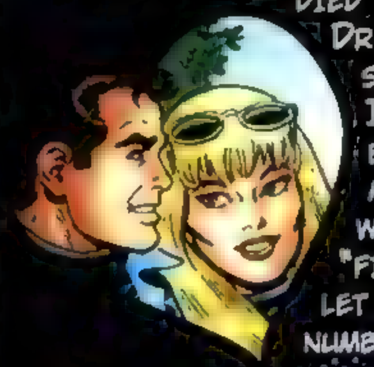
Ironically, Gwen was a victim of her own success. While redheaded "party girl" Mary Jane was fun, off beat and unpredictable, Gwen was loyal, steadfast and true. Marvel's art director, John Romita, Sr., the man who suggested killing Gwen, remembers that "Stan always accused me of making Mary Jane look better than Gwen," he laughs. "I used to deny it, but I couldn't make Gwen as glamorous as Mary Jane. I always thought of Gwen as a more sensible girl. When I first suggested Gwen be killed, Stan said no. Later, we realized it would be the most shocking story to be done. Gerry Conway got threatening mail for months after her death, but he shouldn't take the rap alone—it was a committee decision!" The death also weighed heavily on the artist involved. Gil Kane, who penciled Gwen's fatal fall, admits, "I felt like a hitman for Marvel Comics—they would call me in whenever they wanted to kill somebody! I killed Gwen, her father George Stacy and Norman Osborn."

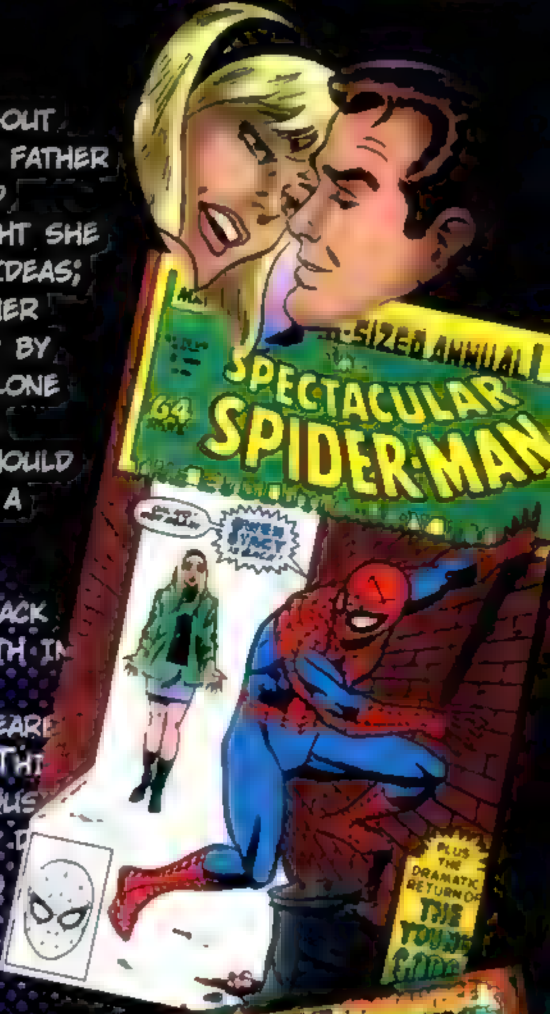
Romita Sr. recalls that "we were originally talking about killing Aunt May, but we thought she was too important to the premise. I said 'We probably have one girlfriend too many.' After having Gwen and Mary Jane clash a few times, it got old. Stan was pushing for Gwen to be the girlfriend and Mary Jane to be the comic relief. I said, 'If you kill Mary Jane, I don't think it would be a big loss, even though she was my character." (MJ was introduced by Lee and Romita in **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #42.**)

"You only kill the most important characters, otherwise it's a waste of time," he declares. "You kill a major character like Gwen Stacy and look at the reaction. Years later, people still talk about that story." By eliminating Gwen, Romita feels "Mary Jane and Peter were able to develop. Mary Jane was dizzy and fun and then she met Peter Parker, who's very somber and serious all the time. She cheers him up and he makes her responsible. I feel like I have Gwen's blood on my hands, but I'm very pleased."

Stan Lee, Gwen's creator, remembers her death vividly. "I was going on a trip to England and Gerry Conway had taken over writing Spider-Man. When I returned, people were saying to me, 'How could you do that to poor Gwen?' Who knew he was

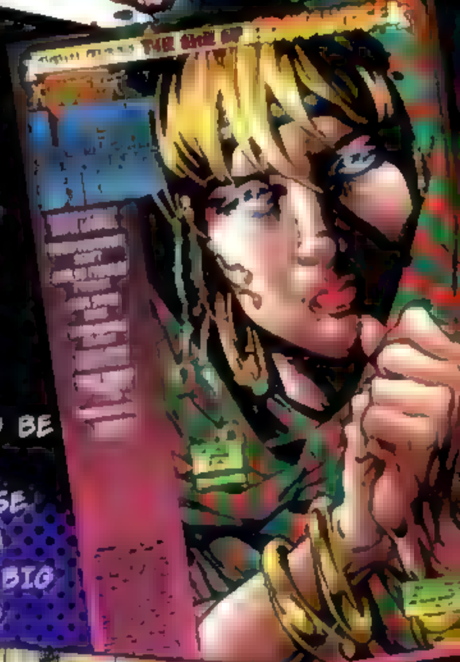
GONNA KILL GWEN STACY?!" LEE CONFESSES THAT "I FELT BAD ABOUT GWEN—THAT POOR GIRL, WE KILLED HER WHOLE FAMILY! (GWEN'S FATHER DIED IN AN EARLIER SKIRMISH BETWEEN SPIDEY AND DR. OCTOPUS.) I AGREED WITH FANS WHO THOUGHT SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE DIED AND I GOT SOME WEIRD IDEAS; I THOUGHT 'MAYBE WE CLONE HER AND BRING HER BACK?'" GWEN RETURNED AS A CLONE. HAUNTED BY MEMORIES SHE NEVER EXPERIENCED, GWEN'S CLONE WAS AN INTERESTING, TRAGIC HEROINE, BUT LEE "FINALLY DECIDED THAT SHE WAS DEAD AND WE SHOULD LET HER GO." STILL, THIS OPENED THE DOOR FOR A NUMBER OF GWEN STACY RETURN APPEARANCES.



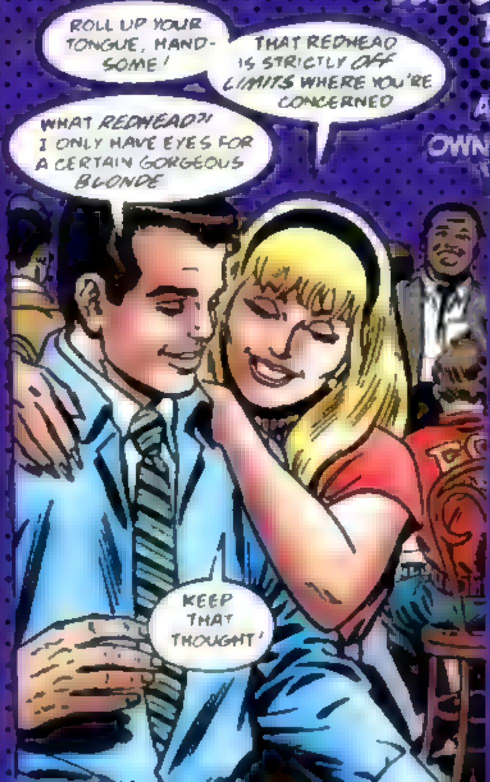


AFTER AN EARLY GUEST SHOT IN WHAT IF, GWEN FINALLY CAME BACK IN STYLE. SHE LED A GROUP OF REBELS TRYING TO SAVE THE EARTH IN X-MEN'S "AGE OF APOCALYPSE." SHE RETURNED TO SPIDER-MAN FOR THE "MAXIMUM CLONAGE" STORYLINE AND APPEARE THE FINAL ISSUE OF THE LANDMARK LIMITED SERIES, MARVELS. THI WHAT MAKES GWEN SO UNIQUE—EVEN THOUGH SHE'S MADE NUMEROUS APPEARANCES IN THE LAST 23 YEARS, SHE'S TECHNICALLY REMAINED D THE "AGE OF APOCALYPSE" TOOK PLACE IN AN ALTERNATE TIMELINE, VELS AND MOST RECENTLY, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN '96 WERE FLASHBACKS, AND SHE'S A CLONE IN HER CURRENT SPIDER-MAN APPEARANCES.

BY RESURRECTING HER, WRITERS AND ARTISTS ATTEMPT TO GIVE HER LIFE MEANING TO MAKE UP FOR HER TRAGIC END. IN MARVELS, KURT BUSIEK AND ALEX ROSS USE GWEN'S DEATH AS A METAPHOR FOR THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE. "IT WASN'T CALCULATED. IT JUST HAPPENED THAT WAY," BUSIEK EXPLAINS. "GWEN MADE THE PERFECT ENDING. THE MARVEL UNIVERSE CHANGED AND GWEN'S DEATH MAKES A TERRIFIC SYMBOL FOR THAT. IT HAD THE SYMBOLIC RESONANCE WE NEEDED, SO WE RAN WITH IT."

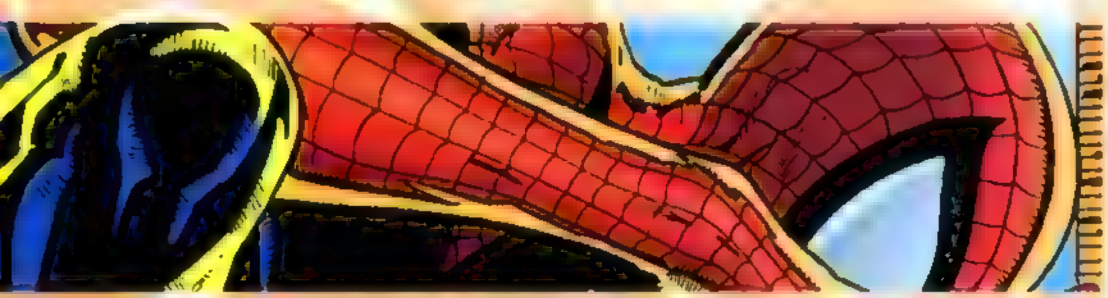


GWEN'S POSTHUMOUS POPULARITY IS SO STRONG, MANY EXPECTED HER TO BE IN FOX-TV'S ANIMATED SPIDER-MAN. PRODUCER/STORY EDITOR JOHN SEMPER SAYS THAT "I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE GWEN ON THE SHOW BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT AUDIENCES FALLING IN LOVE WITH A DEAD CHARACTER. I'M SURE SOME PEOPLE WERE UPSET THAT GWEN WASN'T ON THE SHOW. THE BIG PROBLEM WITH HAVING GWEN IS THAT EVERYONE WILL KNOW SHE HAS TO DIE. AS A READER, I LOVED GWEN STACY MANY YEARS AGO—I LOVED GWEN A LITTLE MORE THAN MARY JANE," SEMPER CONFESSES. "BECAUSE SHE'S DEAD, I MADE FELICIA HARDY (THE GIRL WHO BECOMES THE BLACK CAT) INTO A VARIATION ON GWEN. SHE'S HER OWN CHARACTER, BUT SHE FILLS THE 'GWEN STACY GAP.'"



NO MATTER WHERE OR HOW SHE APPEARS NEXT, IT'S A SAFE BET THAT GWEN WILL REMAIN THE BUSIEST DEAD PERSON THIS SIDE OF ELVIS, PALMER AND BUCKY BARNES.

THE SPECTACULAR LUKE ROSS!
(or should that have been Spider-Man?)



Brazilian-born Luke Ross was only 16 years old when he first started working in comics, penciling and inking short stories for a small publisher in his native Brazil. After learning of the Art and Comics agency which represented artists for the American comic book market, Luke contacted them, and after a brief period of honing and fine-tuning his style, received his first assignment: a four-issue limited series called BLOOD IS THE HARVEST for the now defunct Eclipse Comics.

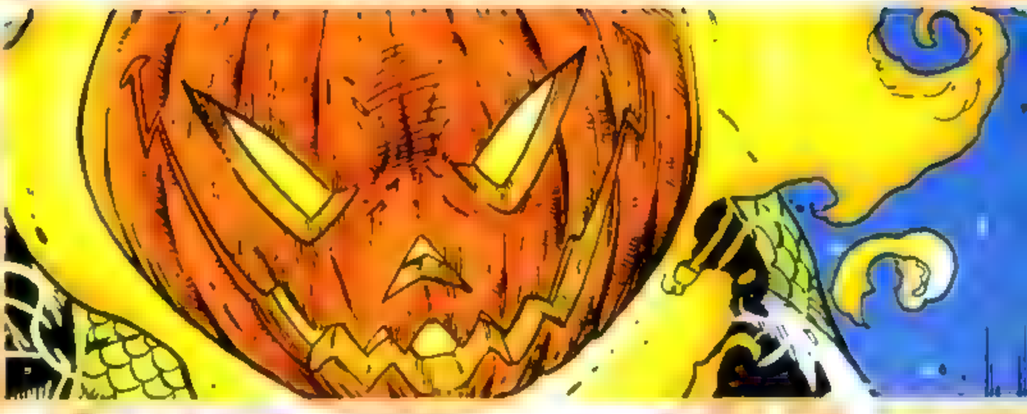
Following that, Luke did work for Innovation (QUANTUM LEAP, LOST IN SPACE and Continuity (MS. MYSTIC.) From those came his first offer from Marvel, a thus-far unpublished inventory story for SPIDER-MAN 2099, then several series for Valiant (HARBRINGER , XO MANOWAR, and NINJAK) Image (YOUNGBLOOD), and DC (NEW GODS). Recently, Marvel has tapped Luke to be the regular penciler on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, in addition to various special projects (CABLE / X-FORCE '96). With a lot of work under his belt for a relative "newcomer," the personable Mr. Ross took a moment to speak with his former assistant editor on SPECTACULAR about his road to success... and where he's going from here.

MB: So where and when were you born?
LR: I was born on July 18, 1972, in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

MB: Were you heavily into reading comics while growing up?
LR: I used to read a lot of comics in my childhood and early teens. I especially liked it when I was sick and had to stay in bed. I asked my mom to buy me comic books to help me get better. I really played the "poor thing" for her and it always worked!

MB: Did you go to school for art? Do you have any formal training?
LR: I never attended an art school in my life. My family certainly wasn't what you'd call rich, so I was forced to learn all by myself. When I was still very young, however, I did meet some very good artists who gave me some important advice on what I could do to improve my scribblings – tips you don't usually get in schools.

And I owe a lot to John Buscema, John Byrne, and Jim Lee. They taught me a lot just by doing great comic book pages!



MB: What were some of the other jobs you had before getting professional work as an artist?
LR: Believe it or not, I've been a shop assistant, a metallurgist, and an electrician!

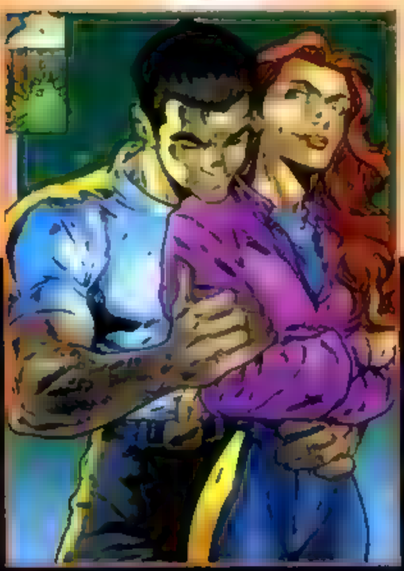
MB: Did you do artwork for other publications (in Brazil) before getting into American comics?
LR: I did a few pieces for several fanzines down here in Brazil. I also did some "adult" comics for some small publishers down here. They were all important training grounds for me, and helped me improve my work.

MB: Tell us how you broke into the American comics publishing scene.
LR: Back in 1991, I was doing children's material, and not enjoying it very much. I always had this yearning to do super heroes! That's when I read in a newspaper that Art and Comics was representing artists for the American market. Marc Campos was the first to break into the business through them, and I was very excited about it! I got in touch with Helcio de Carvalho, and showed him my portfolio. He liked it, then he asked me to draw a few sample pages with specific characters to show editors that I could draw anything! I did the samples, and next week, Helcio flew to the United States, with my samples and those of several other artists. Three months later, I got my first assignment: a horror mini-series for Eclipse Comics.

MB: What was your first Marvel assignment?
LR: The very first one was an inventory issue of SPIDER-MAN 2099, and it has never seen print!

MB: You also did CABLE/X-FORCE '96, where you got to draw a ton of characters. Do you find it more intimidating or challenging to do a group book, as opposed to a book starring a solo hero like Spider-Man?
LR: I think group and solo character books are both a challenge. On one hand, working with a group is always hard, especially when you're dealing with page layouts. You have to fit so many people in the panels, and draw so many different facial expressions! In that sense, working with just one character, as in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, is a breeze! However, in a solo hero comic, the main character is a lot more in demand, so you have to be careful not to always harp on the same thing, repeating the same pose, and turning him into a bore. It's a challenge. No matter what kind of book you're doing, it's gotta be exciting, and that's where the hard work pays off!

MB: Are you having fun with SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN? The book sure looks like you are!
LR: I'm having a lot of fun!! It's been like one of my dreams, ever since I was a little kid, is coming true! The feeling gets stronger with every page I draw! Spidey is just a terrific character to work with. He's really fun.

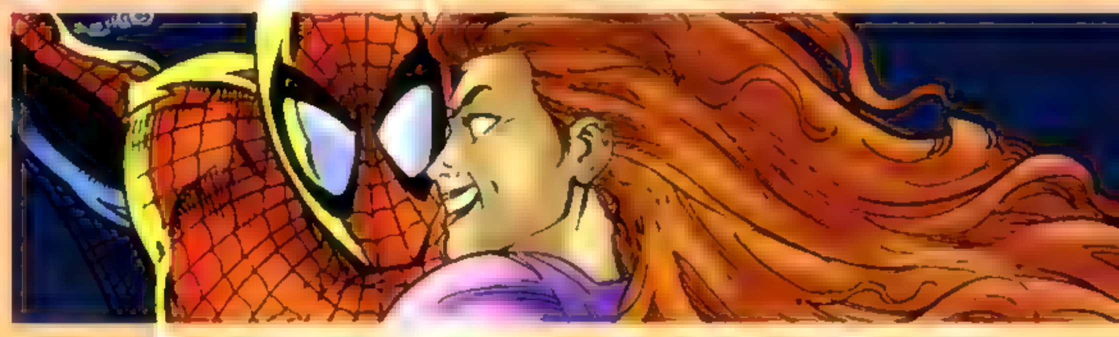


MB: There seems to be a little bit of Todd McFarlane's influence in your work, a little bit of manga, and some touches that are distinctly yours. Who have been some of your influences from comics and otherwise?
LR: I think Todd McFarlane is a fantastic artist. I've learned a lot from him. But I'm also influenced by everything else I like to read. Just about every artist has

"...working with just one character, as in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, is a breeze!"

something for you to learn, if you know how to look at his work. Right now, my favorites are SPAWN, GEN 13, GENERATION X, and the awesome backgrounds and landscapes from Masamune Shirow's stuff.

MB: Your style has changed a lot from DC's NEW GODS to SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. Do you approach working on each book differently from an artistic and design standpoint?
LR: I don't like using just one style for everything I do. Different comics have different approaches, different moods. I always try to figure out what is best for a certain series, what the fans would like to see in there, and then I try to apply it to my own style. I really like to play along with that and see where creativity will lead me



MB: What's unique about Spider-Man that should come across in the art in your opinion?
LR: Spidey is not easy to work with, in the sense that you don't have a real face there to show his emotions. He's got that full-face mask! You have to dramatize more and use body language to the extreme to show readers what he's feeling and what's going on. I think that's a very unique characteristic of Spidey.

MB: How about the villains? You did a really great, creepy Lizard in your first issue of SPECTACULAR, #259. Who else among Spidey's enemies would you like to tackle artistically?
LR: Thanks! I'm glad you liked the creepy Lizard. I'd love to draw some of those real bad guys I used to see when I was a kid – the Vulture, the Green Goblin, Doctor Octopus, Sandman – any and all of Spidey's old enemies. Those characters are great!

MB: What's it like working with writers like Todd Dezago and now J.M. DeMatteis? There seems to be a lot of creative synergy even though you guys don't even speak the same language!
LR: It was very nice working with Todd Dezago. He really knows how to build tension and mood in a plot! I hope I get to work with him again sometime in the future. And J.M. DeMatteis is a great writer. Boy, I love the way he describes panels. You feel like you're reading a movie script! I'd love to be his partner on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN for a loooong time! For me, a great comic book storyteller is that guy who can write a plot and get the penciler excited about drawing it! That was always the case when I worked with Todd, and now it's also the case with Mr. DeMatteis. Sometimes, I add a few little details in the panels, something just to give 'em a little extra zing; a closeup here, a little knicknack in the background there. Gee, I hope the writers like them! They may want to skin me alive for those, and I don't even know!

MB: What's your greatest unfulfilled goal in comics? Did you ever want to write as well as draw, for example?
LR: I guess my next goal would be to both pencil and ink my own Spidey story. I'm not real crazy about the idea of writing stories for comics, but I would very much like the opportunity to give suggestions for future storylines, sometime in the future.

MB: Is there anything else you'd like the world to know about you? Hobbies, pastimes, interesting anecdotes about the business, etc.?
LR: In the very scarce spare time I have – if any! – I love watching Anime (Japanese animation), listen to music, and even work on some sculptures. I also like collecting toys and – oh, yeah! Believe it or not, I also like reading good comics!

– Mark Bernardo

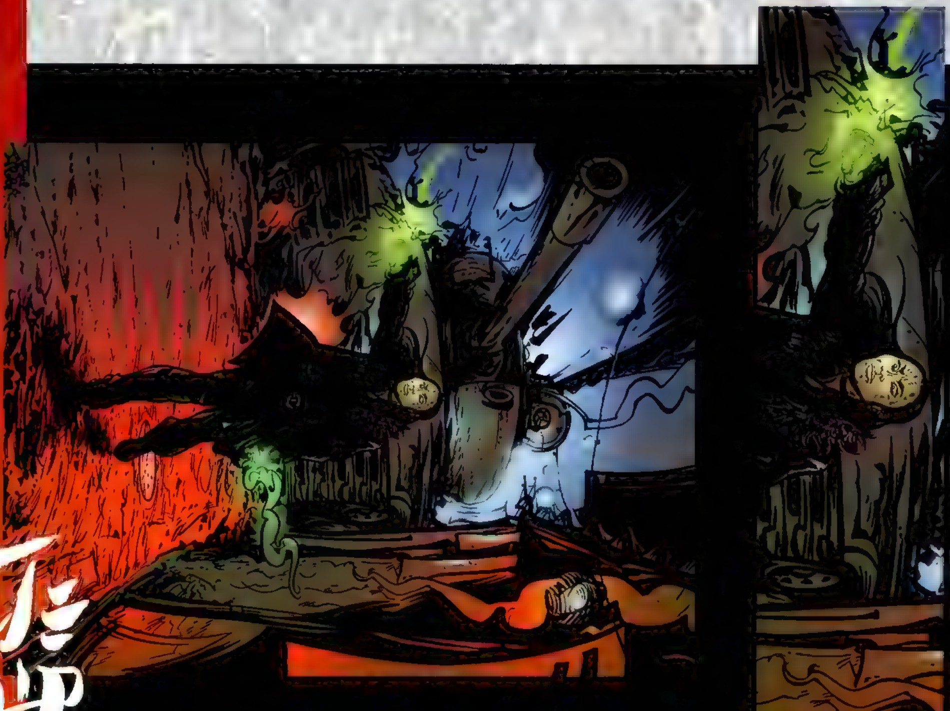
Time Slip

Hope

Welcome to the Marvel Universe that would have been if today's hottest creators had been with Stan Lee on the eve of the birth of Marvel Comics. Think of this as the world that might have been. Think of it as the world that might still be becoming.

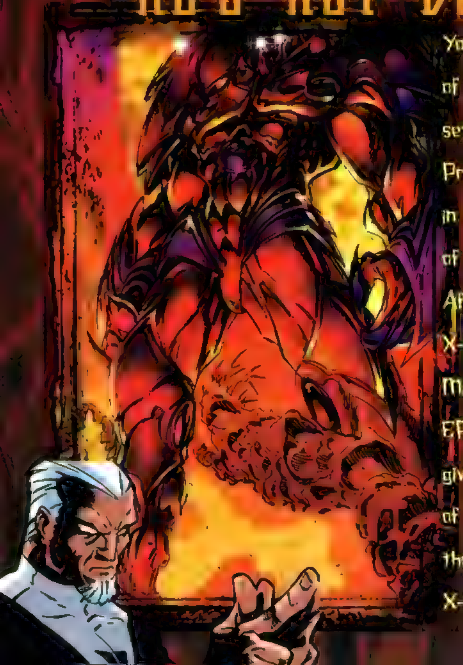
Paul Pope, artist/writer of the critically acclaimed THB and giant-sized Buzz Buzz, has been commissioned to design the most nefarious villain to ever face the Invincible Iron Man — the Mandarin. The original Mandarin journeyed throughout China and learned the magics of an ancient dragon. This led to his rise in power. But the Mandarin designed by Paul Pope used his inheritance in much the way a dandy would: he squandered it on pleasure and self-indulgence. This Mandarin is a philosopher pirate who scaled the mountains of anti-thought and became one with the Dragon Lines that encircled the globe. A born fighter, the Mandarin's first order of business was to steal back his own inheritance and properties—everything that was taken away from him by the Communist revolutionaries. It is at these Chinese Communists that the Mandarin would strike. His goal is nothing short of the return of his land (and the world itself, which he considers his land) to traditional Chinese life. But for such a goal, he needed power. He thus sought out the ten mystic rings of refictionality. Each ring comes with its own power that operates both in the physical world and in that of conjured impossibility:

#1 Occultism—circular reasoning inverts reality against itself, creating mirror-magics.
#2 Gasoline—this ring of reality accelerates the Mandarin's personal space, once misunderstood to be super-speed.
#3 Alcohology—possibly once owned by the master of the Drunken Master fighting tong, this ring looses the spirits of insobriety on the clear-minded.
#4 Integration—tomfoolery and reality come together in a mesh of lost probabilities.
#5 Disintegration—nothing can stand before its power. And nothing stands behind it. Except, of course, the wearer.
#6 Voyeurism—plummets onlookers into the black and buckled dimensions of taboo.
#7 Mysterioso—smoke and mirrors live within this ring and fall into each other for all eternity.
#8 Flame On—believed to be formed from an amalgamation of the artificial blood of the Original Human Torch and fool's gold, this ring creates artificial fire. It burns only manmade objects.
#9 Blackness—this illuminates the depths of evil that lurk within all men.
#10 Materializer—nothing is necessary for this ring to work. Literally nothing. Only in the void of thought, when it seems there are no alternatives, can this ring bring creation.



The Mandarin is a pimpernelian puppeteer, pitting world powers against themselves in an arena of his unmaking. Having grown up in the paper alleys that weave a maché maze throughout his village, the Mandarin is a crafty devil. He leads iron terrors through a tearable world, and once these iron beasts have bloated themselves on their invincibility, the Mandarin turns the tables (and world) on them and bends his enemies to his will via his ten magic rings.

HEY! DON'T STICK THAT FORK IN ONSLAUGHT — HE'S NOT DONE YET!



You thought you'd seen the last of Onslaught when the dust settled, the heroes departed, and Professor Xavier turned himself in to Valerie Cooper, Chairwoman of the Committee on Mutant Affairs in the pages of X-MEN #57? Think again, Marvel maniac—ONSLAUGHT: EPILOGUE, due out in December, gives you the Christmas present of knowing what happens next in the most horrible chapter of the X-Men's history ever written!

"This is the story of Xavier coming to terms with himself. He has to deal with the fact that he was Onslaught," says EIC Bob Harras. "Now, apparently stripped of his powers, he needs to realize that he still has a place in the world." Harsh! Not only is it the riveting story of a good-guy-turned-bad-guy on a major guilt trip, it's also the appalling story of the X-Men's trusted mentor chained up like a junkyard dog!

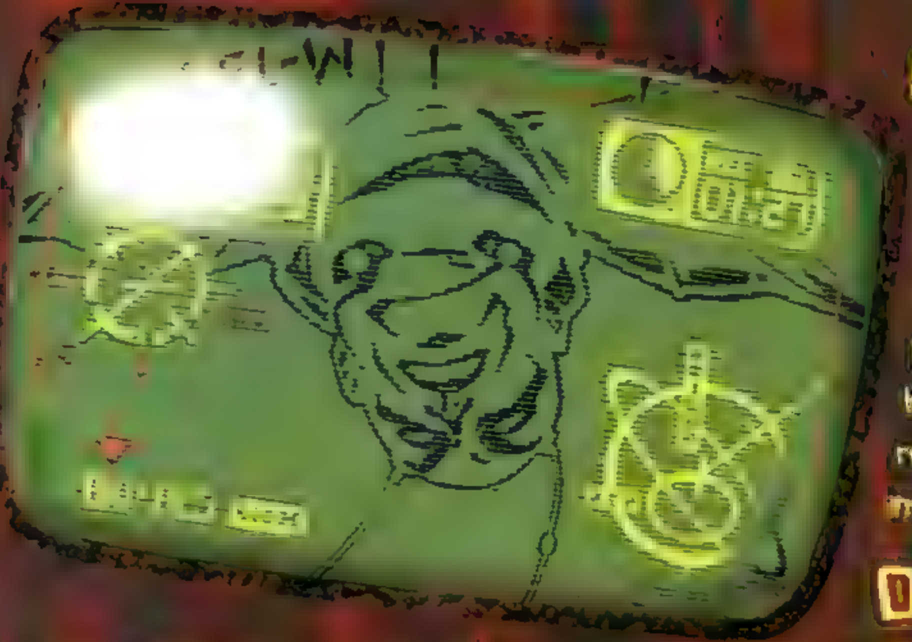
How did it come to this, you ask? After Xavier surrendered to Valerie Cooper, she escorted him to Washington, where he was placed in a cell overnight. But in the morning, Xavier had vanished without a trace! Now, not even the X-Men know where their old leader and recent nemesis is being held! Powerless and alone, Xavier writhes in the clutches of a man whose pleasure in seeing him dead could only be rivaled by his delight in seeing Onslaught rise again!

Xavier is being held prisoner by Bastion!

You, loyal reader, will remember Bastion as the mysterious and evil force behind Operation: Zero Tolerance—a multinational organization whose main goal is the total eradication of mutants from the Earth's population! Now he's holding Xavier in the abandoned Hulkbusters' facility! Here, at the behest of the government (which is preparing indictments against Onslaught), he's got every intention of finding out whether Xavier has retained his powers—and whether the potential exists within him for Onslaught to return! If it is indeed possible, then Bastion will have in his hands the ultimate weapon for mutant extermination!

Bastion may be one evil son-of-a gun, but he's no fool—and he's not taking any chances! Maximum security's not good enough for this guy— the walls in Xavier's cell are twenty feet thick! Controlled by a psionic neck-cuff and bracelets, Xavier isn't going anywhere, but that doesn't stop Bastion from manhandling the crippled man pretty severely. He better hope Onslaught doesn't emerge!

But Xavier's got bigger fish to fry! Left alone in his constantly monitored cell, prisoner #M-13 has all day and all night to contemplate the torment he put his beloved X-Men through. Not only has he caused them tremendous physical and possibly



irreversible emotional damage, but the rise of Onslaught has struck a deadly blow against Xavier's long-cherished goal—that of mankind and mutants living together in peace.

Though no one knows where he is, the Professor is not alone! Down the hall is a prisoner who has never seen daylight. A prisoner who has never even seen the outside of the Hulkbusters' facility! Prisoner M-9 is just 5 years old, a Manite wielding unbelievable psi-powers. Cheating the video monitors, M-9 slips through the twenty-foot walls and the powerful psi-shields of Professor Xavier's cell every now and then to pay him a visit. Does this little girl know where Xavier's powers lie? Could she be the key Bastion needs to unlock the deadly Onslaught?

Bastion is hunting for the key all right...but he hopes to find it in the shape of lovely psychiatrist Ingrid Thysson! Ingrid has been flown to the deserted base to run tests on Xavier to determine the presence and level of his powers. But does Ingrid know what kind of powers she's dealing with? Can a couple of Rorschach tests and a word-association game reveal the depths of Onslaught?

Will Onslaught reemerge? And if he does, will it be Bastion, Ingrid Thysson, or gentle prisoner M-9 who finally unleashes the terror? ONSLAUGHT: EPILOGUE will provide some insight into the answers, but, says editor Mark Powers, "The real battle will be the one going on inside Xavier's head."

ONSLAUGHT: EPILOGUE is written by Larry Hama (WOLVERINE) and penciled by hot new talent Randy Green! "He's young, he's fresh, he's innovative, and we love him!" trumpets Bob Harras. Green's open, uncluttered style is the talk of the Bullpen—and it's just perfect for depicting those open, uncluttered prison interiors!

"The ONSLAUGHT saga was so tremendously popular and got such a response from our readers that we felt we owed them a follow-up book that focused solely on the events that took place in Xavier's life directly afterwards," explains Bob. ONSLAUGHT: EPILOGUE also feeds back into X-MEN continuity, where the origin of the Manite...and the possibility of Xavier's trial...are explored! This is a landmark issue, and a gold mine of information regarding Onslaught's past and future actions!

Don't miss it!

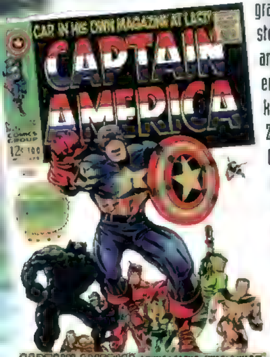
—Polly Watson

AMATEUR!
Altitude. Attitude.
(Achieve a safe, unnatural high.)
Jumping Flash! 2
PlayStation

MARVEL CHRONICLES 9: 1968

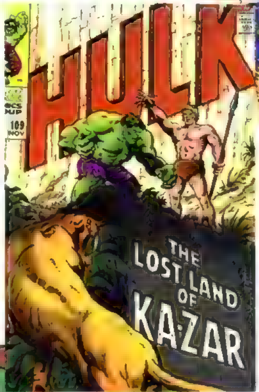
In the mid-1960s many of Marvel's classic heroes did not have their own titles, but were instead featured in "split books": Captain America and Iron Man starred in TALES OF SUSPENSE, the Hulk and Sub-Mariner shared TALES TO ASTONISH, and STRANGE TALES hosted Doctor Strange (naturally) and Nick Fury, Agent Of S.H.I.E.L.D. In 1968 each of these characters received his own comic, initiating the first major expansion of the super hero line.

TALES OF SUSPENSE was retitled CAPTAIN AMERICA with issue #100, as Stan Lee and Jack Kirby gave us the grand finale to the storyline in which Cap and the Black Panther encountered Bucky's killer Baron Heinrich Zemo—or so they thought. In fact, for once a Marvel villain had not returned from seeming death: Zemo's pilot was impersonating his deceased master, implementing his plan for world conquest, which Cap and his allies thwarted.



Lee and Kirby next brought back the Red Skull, this time backed up by the Fourth Sleeper and an entire neo-Nazi army. They also introduced a new recurring adversary for the Captain, the criminal psychiatrist Doctor Faustus, in issue #107. Iron Man began the year in TALES OF SUSPENSE at the mercy of two new foes: the mysterious "Big M," head of the Maggia, and her enforcer, Whiplash, who is today known as Blacklash. The Armored Avenger then moved into his own comic, IRON MAN, where new Marvel writer Archie Goodwin revealed "Big M" as the beautiful socialite Whitney Frost; she would gain another, more ominous masked identity within the coming year.

TALES TO ASTONISH celebrated its one hundredth issue with a cataclysmic battle between the Hulk and the Sub-Mariner, powerfully illustrated by Marie Severin. Two issues later the book was renamed THE INCREDIBLE HULK. Stan Lee retook the writing reins with issues #108 and #109, bringing the Green Goliath to Kazar's prehistoric Savage Land.



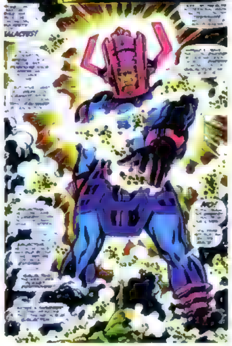
Meanwhile, Roy Thomas and John Buscema became the creative team of the Sub-Mariner's first book since the Golden Age of Comics. Thomas revealed that a human mentalist known as Destiny had accompanied Namor's human father on his fateful voyage to Antarctica. There Destiny had found an ancient helmet that gave him extraordinary powers. Decades later, using the helmet, he destroyed the Atlanteans' Antarctic capital and afflicted Namor with amnesia, leaving him as the homeless drifter the Human Torch found in FF #4. Towards the end of 1968, Namor finally had his showdown with Destiny, who ultimately fell from a skyscraper to his own death. The Helmet, though, would go on to spread misery in its true guise as the diabolical Serpent Crown.

With issue #169 STRANGE TALES was renamed DOCTOR STRANGE and was written by Roy Thomas who was soon joined by artist Gene Colan. Finally Doctor Strange journeyed into the distant dimension to which his beloved Clea had been sent to save her from the sorceress Umar. Strange not only found Clea there, but also his long missing archfoe Dormammu. Strange brought Clea safely back to New York with him, only to encounter a new menace, the demon-worshipping cultists known as the Sons of Satannish.

The final issues of STRANGE TALES found Nick Fury locked in his epic battle against the Yellow Claw, as spectacularly written and illustrated by Jim Steranko. Readers were surely astounded when the Claw turned out not only to be a robot, but a mere pawn in a game manipulated behind the scenes by Doctor Doom for his own amusement! The real Yellow Claw, the star of his own series in the 1950s, would finally return years later in CAPTAIN AMERICA #164.

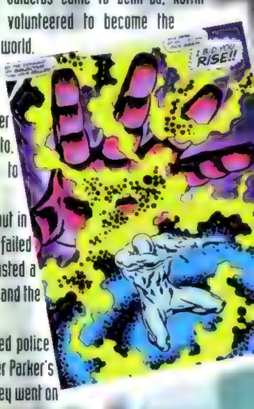
Steranko continued to amaze with four of the first five issues of NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD, most memorably with the saga of Scorpio, a masked assassin who wielded the Zodiac Key, a weapon containing enormous energies. At the end of issue #5 Fury recognized the unmasked Scorpio just before he plunged into the sea through a hail of bullets. And thus Steranko took his leave of SHIELD, with the mystery tantalizingly unresolved.

Mar-Vell, the alien spy with a conscience, also graduated to his own book, CAPTAIN MARVEL, initially written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Gene Colan, who introduced a new supporting cast member, Cape Canaveral security chief Carol Danvers, the future Ms. Marvel and Binary of X-MEN.



But perhaps the most important new Marvel comic of 1968 was THE SILVER SURFER by Stan Lee and John Buscema, who considerably altered what readers thought they knew about the Surfer. In his debut the Surfer seemed an utterly amoral, inhuman alien who first developed a conscience when he encountered the human race. Now Lee and Buscema revealed that once he had been a man named Norrin Radd who lived on a paradise of a planet called Zenn-La, deeply in love with the beautiful Shalla Bal. When Galactus came to Zenn-La, Norrin Radd volunteered to become the world-devourer's servant if only he would spare his world. Galactus agreed and transformed Norrin Radd into the Silver Surfer.

In SILVER SURFER #3 Lee and Buscema added another major element to the Surfer mythos: the demon Mephisto, who from this time forward would forever attempt to corrupt and possess the Surfer's noble soul.



Today there is a whole line of Spider-Man books, but in 1968 the first attempt to give Spidey a second book failed commercially. The original SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, in a larger, magazine-like format, lasted a mere two issues, but the second issue showcased a classic clash between the Web-Slinger and the original Green Goblin, as crafted by Stan Lee and John Romita Sr.

Meanwhile, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN introduced Gwen's father, the wise and kindly retired police captain George Stacy. And in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #5 at last we learned about Peter Parker's parents. Richard and Mary Parker had left Peter as a child with May and Ben Parker when they went on

on a secret mission for the government. The Parkers ran afoul of the Red Skull, who had his assassin, the Finisher, kill them both. In the course of the Annual, Spider-Man tracked the Red Skull and the Finisher to their lair in Algeria, where Spider-Man obtained evidence to clear his parents of false charges of treason.

Unfortunately Stan had apparently forgotten that he had already established that the Skull was in suspended animation at the time Peter's parents died. It remained for subsequent writers to figure out that the Skull in the Annual was actually the Communist Red Skull from YOUNG MEN COMICS in the 1950s, not the original.

Daredevil has never been in a stranger situation than when Doctor Doom temporarily switched bodies with him in issues #37 and 38. DD also first encountered two of his longtime foes in 1968: the Exterminator, who would later return as the Death-Stalker, and the Jester. Rather abruptly, Daredevil faked the death of his second secret identity, Mike Murdock, in the finale of issue #41.

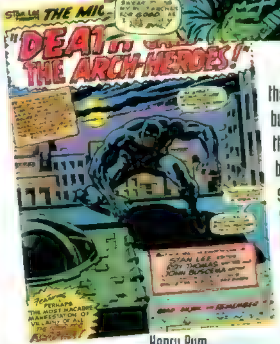
Thor also first met two of his greatest foes in 1968: the Wrecker and the Mangog, a grotesque monster who was the literal embodiment of the hatred and power of an entire alien race that had been defeated by Odin. The year ended with the solution to a puzzling problem: if the mortal doctor named Don Blake was transformed into Thor, how then could Thor have existed for centuries? In issue #159 Lee and Kirby explained that years ago Odin had transformed Thor into a medical student named Don Blake in order to teach the arrogant thunder god humility.

Believe it or not, back in 1968, THE X-MEN was one of Marvel's less popular series. Perhaps that is why it was decided to make a drastic change: in issue #41 Professor Xavier died—or so it seemed—in stopping a doomsday machine activated by a subterranean menace called Grotesk. At this, the worst possible moment, Magneto attacked, having returned in THE AVENGERS, and won Quicksilver and a reluctant Scarlet Witch back to his side. This led to the climax in AVENGERS #53, wherein the two teams joined against him. Not only did Wanda and Pietro abandon Magneto, but so did his long-suffering slave, the Toad, who has never yet returned to him.

But the X-Men's troubles were still not over. Xavier's ally in the FBI, Fred Duncan, ordered the breakup of the team. From now on each issue of THE X-MEN would feature only one or two of the members. (Scott and Jean even took new jobs: Jean became a swimsuit model and Scott was, of all things, a radio announcer!)

Marvel must have realized almost immediately the breakup was a mistake, because by issue #49 the team had reunited to combat the mutant Mesmero. This issue also introduced a green-haired mutant named Lorna Dane, now known as Polaris of X-Factor. The story swung into high gear in issue #50 as Jim Steranko took over the art.

The omnipresent Roy Thomas had a busy year on THE AVENGERS, most often working with artist John Buscema. In issue #48 Dane Whitman succeeded his late criminal uncle as the new, heroic Black Knight. After a few appearances in THE AVENGERS, the Black Knight received a solo story in MARVEL SUPER-HEROES 17, in which he first met the ghost of his ancestor, the hero of Stan Lee's BLACK KNIGHT comics of the 1950s.



In AVENGERS #52 not only did the Black Panther join the ranks, but the Avengers also first faced the Grim Reaper, who insanely blamed the Avengers for the seeming demise of his brother, Wonder Man. Only a few issues later the Avengers first encountered one of their greatest foes, Ultron, the sinister robot creation of Henry Pym.

Next, in issue #56, using a time machine invented by Doctor Doom, Captain America and other Avengers traveled back to 1945, where, as phantom-like beings, they witnessed the Captain's final wartime clash with Baron Zemo, the encounter that ended in Bucky's death. In AVENGERS ANNUAL #2 the time-traveling Avengers found themselves in an alternate timeline where a menace named the Scarlet Centurion had taken hypnotic control of the original Avengers and used them to take over the world. Cap's team managed to defeat the alternate versions of Thor, Iron Man, the Hulk, and the rest before returning to their own reality; the Scarlet Centurion escaped into the future, where he became the Avengers' archfoe, Kang the Conqueror.

Ultron returned in issue #57 with his new creation, the eerie android named the Vision. But the Vision turned against his master and was welcomed into the Avengers in issue #58.

The year ended for THE AVENGERS with a mystery, as a new costumed figure called Yellowjacket showed up and claimed to have done away with Henry Pym. Even more shockingly, Pym's longtime girlfriend the Wasp agreed to marry this suspected murderer! To find out what was really going on, you'll have to wait for our next installment.

But as for our last chapter's cliffhanger, when we left FANTASTIC FOUR in 1967, the Mad Thinker had succeeded in brainwashing the Thing to attack the rest of the team. Ben ultimately regained his true personality, but the FF still lost a member: Sue went on pregnancy leave, to be replaced at year's end by Crystal of the Inhumans.

In Lee and Kirby's landmark FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #6 Reed Richards discovered that effects of the radiation that had given the FF their powers now threatened to kill both Sue and her unborn baby. To save their lives, Reed, Ben, and Johnny set off into the Negative Zone to find a cure, only to learn it lay in the possession of a new enemy, the insect-like Annihilus. Nevertheless, Reed obtained the precious cosmic control rod he needed, and Sue gave birth to their son, whom we know today as Franklin Richards. It was another milestone in the "Marvel Age of Comics": two super heroes had not only wed, they had become parents. FF ANNUAL #6 summed up Marvel in the 1960s: it set new precedents, broke the bonds of past storytelling traditions, and spun epic tales that took the characters—and their readers—from the threats of death and despair to the birth of new life and hope.

—Peter Sanderson

back issue BROWS

BOOKS WORTH SECOND LOOKS NOW IN THE BACK ISSUE BINS!

Forget it, frantic ones! This special BROWS (it's special because we say so) features not only some great back issues worth checking out, but one of the all-time greatest comics in history. An epic so Epicurean in its scope, we almost needed to expand to three pages.

This month, we visit FORBIDDEN PLANET, in New York. And while their back issue selection is not the largest in the city, it does boast one the largest collections of trade paperbacks we've come across. Their number is 212-473-1576 and are located on the corner of 13th and Broadway!

Fantastic Four #236

This is it! One of the greatest comics ever published. Probably John Byrne's greatest contribution to the medium. It features the Puppet Master and Dr. Doom in a story called "Terror In A Tiny Town." and celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Fantastic Four. We dare anybody to find something wrong with this issue. It's proof positive that this truly is the world's greatest comic. Plus, in a special back up feature, Stan Lee writes a story around Jack Kirby's layouts for the old Fantastic Four Animated series. You know, the one with Herbie the Robot? All we can say is "Buy This Book!"

The Falcon #1-4

One of Marvel's closest kept secrets is the fact that the Falcon is a mutant. Ever since his first appearance way back in Captain America, the mutant politician who could talk to the birds has had a small yet significant fan following. This limited series featured art by Paul (X-MEN) Smith and Mark (GREEN LANTERN) Bright and some great stories as well. One features the Falcon against a mutant-hunting Sentinel.

Avengers #257

Roger Stern has long been considered one of Marvel's greatest writers. His run on Dr. Strange is the best run ever on the Master Of The Mystic Arts. And Stern's work on Amazing Spider-Man is legendary. There are many, though who believe Roger Stern's writing of the Avengers is his best to date. This issue features the Avengers vs. Terminus, some great art by John Buscema, and some incredible inks by Tom Palmer (who has inked more issues of Avengers than any creator associated with any single book in all of Marveldom). And, for those not privy to the announcement of a new Savage Land series by Mark Waid and Andy Kubert, it also features Ka-Zar, Shanna The She-Devil and Zabu. This issue will be very scarce very soon.

SANTA RUNS A-FOWL, The Ridiculous Return of HOWARD THE DUCK

What Marvel character cops attitude like there's no tomorrow, bears the name of a small, often nasty, woodland creature, loves to chomp on big ol' stogies, and is about to star in a one-shot written by the incomparable Larry Hama? Well, if you read the title to this article already or bothered to look at the pretty pictures around it, you should know by know I'm not talking about Wolverine. I'm talking about the web-footed and wondrous, the ever-lovin' blue-eyed, the uncanny as they come...Howard the Duck!

In his upcoming HOWARD THE DUCK HOLIDAY SPECIAL, this plucky hero will enchant, enrapture, and quite possibly make readers want to paste large clumps of feathers to themselves. At the very least, in the words of the Special's scribe Larry Hama, "I think they'll get a couple of chuckles. It'll be a pleasant diversion from whatever's buggin' 'em."

That said, let's introduce our hero to the unenlightened. Howard comes from a world much like our own, with one startling difference—there, waterfowl rule the planet. Even in that world, Howard was somewhat of an outcast; blessed with incredible genius, he educated himself on the mean streets of a duck-eat-duck world. Suddenly, a twist of fate caused the Cosmic Axis to shift (which happened more often than you'd think back in the '70s!), landing this intrepid-yet-undertall hero in our unsuspecting world. Once here, Howard began a valiant quest to protect Cleveland from the likes of Le Beaver, Doctor Bong, and a host of other villains too ridiculous to name.

After years of relative peace with his beloved Beverly Switzler, Howard has again found himself dragged by his little cottony tail into the limelight of the Marvel Universe. It began when he picked up the hitchhiking Generation Xers, Skin and Chamber [In the soon-to-be-legendary-but-not-just-yet GENERATION X #21.–Tim]. Then, October saw the web-footed wonder meet the webbed wonder in SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP #5. And the craziness will only continue in November and December's GHOST RIDERs #81 and 82. Joining our daring duck there will be fellow 1970s Marvel alums, Devil Dinosaur and Moon Boy.

Then, in December, Howard finally makes it into his own oh-so-special. The excitement behind the one-shot is almost tangible. Larry Hama will be joined by Pasqual [UNCANNY X-MEN, 2099 UNLIMITED] Ferry and Art [2099 UNLIMITED, X-MEN] Thibert. "I've seen the pencils by Pasqual Ferry," says Hama. "They're just a knockout. I like working with guys who draw good!"

Some might question why Hama, who's known for his grim-and-gritty super hero work, would be picked for this project. Hama replies, "[HOWARD THE DUCK SPECIAL Editor] James Felder approached me because he knew I'd get it in on time." All joking aside, Hama is no stranger to humor—or waterfowl! "Comedy and humor is what I originally did. I still consider myself a duck man and a funny animal guy."

It looks like the "duck man" has come through as he's sending Howard on a mission to save Santa Claus! The adventure begins with Bev working as one of Santa Claus's elves at the local mega-mall. Through a twist of fate

that's frighteningly common for this bamboozled bird, she calls upon Howard to replace a Santa who was mangled in a tragic escalator accident. Although Howard doesn't get to spend much time at his post, Hama explains, "There's quite a touching scene with a little blind boy who ends up picking Howard's pocket." Also, Howard and Bev become the caretakers of an abandoned kid in a Wolverine costume.

Hama continues, "In the midst of all this, a real elf shows up to draft the help of all the Santa's helpers to fly up to the North Pole and rescue the real Santa, who is being held hostage by Hydra." From there, Howard, Bev, and the brat in the Wolverine costume hop onto a flying, antlered bus to join all the other Clauses of the world (including Klaus Janson and Bubba Claus) in their quest to save Santa!

Will we be seeing the likes of Hydra heads Baron Von Strucker or the Viper? Well...not exactly. "Instead of using the run-of-the-mill Hydra guys, I'm using all the Hydra bean counters," chortles Hama. "The Commando Corps of Hydra Accountants are taking over."

With all this danger, all this action, and all this icy intrigue, will the duck turn yellow? Or worse yet, end up duck au l'orange? And what's next on Howard's plate if he escapes this escapade unscathed? Could there be a HOWARD THE DUCK ROAST in the wings? For now, just watch the feathers fly in the HOWARD THE DUCK HOLIDAY SPECIAL. Or, to quote the web-footed wonder, himself, "WAAUGH!"

—Matt Friedman

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AVENGERS UNGLUED!

MARVEL'S SILLIEST MOMENTS

ONE OF THE SILLIER ADVENTURES OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS TOOK PLACE IN ISSUE #6 OF THEIR MAG, A TALE ENTITLED "MEET THE MASTERS OF EVIL!" THE ISSUE STARTS OFF WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA SHOWING OFF HIS NEW GLOVE MAGNETS, WHICH HE USES TO CONTROL HIS SHIELD AS IT SPINS THROUGH THE AIR. SO IMPRESSED IS THE WASP THAT SHE MARVELS, "THAT WHIRLING SHIELD OF YOURS IS LIKE AN ALL-PURPOSE DETERGENT, CAP!!" (HUH?!!)

CUT TO THE VILLAIN BARON ZEMO, HIDING OUT IN SOUTH AMERICA, FUMING THAT HE HAS HAD A PURPLE HOOD GLUED TO HIS HEAD FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS, THE RESULT OF A CONFLICT WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA! ZEMO TRIES IN VAIN, BUT HE CANNOT REMOVE THE HOOD! (THIS RAISES THE QUESTION: HOW THE HECK DOES THIS GUY EAT, ANYWAY?)

ZEMO CONCOCTS A SINISTER PLAN TO GET HIS REVENGE; A SPECIAL PLAN, ONE INVOLVING GLUE! SPECIFICALLY, THE SUPER-GLUE ADHESIVE X, WHICH ZEMO HAD INVENTED DURING WORLD WAR II—GOOD THING HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO USE IT BACK THEN, OR WHO KNOWS HOW THE WAR MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT!

ZEMO FORMS THE MASTER OF EVIL AND SENDS THEM OUT ON A GLUING SPREE THE LIKES OF WHICH NEW YORK CITY HAS NEVER SEEN! CARS ARE GLUED TO THE STREET! A SHIP IS GLUED TO THE OCEAN! (?) INNOCENT CIVILIANS ARE GLUED DOWN LIKE FLIES ON PAPER! ONE HELPLESS MAN REMARKS, "WE CAN'T GET OUR SHOES OFF IT!"

WITH SO MANY LIVES AT STAKE, NATURALLY THE AVENGERS COME RUNNING—AND FALL RIGHT INTO ZEMO'S TRAP! IN THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE, CAP AND GIANT-MAN ARE GLUED TO THE STREET BY THE RADIOACTIVE MAN! INSTANTLY CAP ASSESSES THIS STICKY SITUATION, FIGURING THIS MUST BE THE WORK OF HIS OLD FOE, ZEMO, WHOM HE LAST SAW 20 YEARS AGO! WHO ELSE WOULD DARE USE SUCH A DIABOLICAL WEAPON AS SUPER GLUE?

IRON MAN LEAPS INTO ACTION, DIGGING UP THE STREET AROUND THE TRAPPED CAP AND GIANT-MAN. NOTICING A NEARBY TOW TRUCK, IRON MAN TOSSES CAP AND GIANT-MAN A COUPLE OF CHAINS AND TOWS THEM AWAY, TAKING A BIG CHUNK OF STREET WITH THEM! GIANT-MAN DESCRIBES THE SITUATION AS "LIKE WATER-SKIING ON DRY LAND!". (THIS WAS THE 1960'S VERSION OF EXTREME SPORTS!)

CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL, IT WAS SURELY NOT ONE OF THE AVENGERS' PROUDEST MOMENTS. THE WASP, OF ALL PEOPLE, FIGURES OUT A SOLUTION TO THIS DILEMMA—SHE PLACES A PHONE CALL TO THE INCARCERATED SUPER-VILLAIN, PASTE POT PETE, WHO IS RENOWNED AS "THE WORLD'S GREATEST AUTHORITY ON PASTES AND ADHESIVES!" (WHAT A SHAME HE USES ALL THAT KNOWLEDGE FOR EVIL, INSTEAD OF GOOD!) IT TURNS OUT THAT P.P.P. HAS A SUPER-DISSOLVER, WHICH CAN DISSOLVE ANY SUBSTANCE, STORED IN AN UPTOWN WAREHOUSE! PETE CUTS A DEAL TO REDUCE HIS SENTENCE, AND THE AVENGERS BECOME UNGLUED.

THEN IT'S TIME FOR THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES TO NAIL THE MASTERS OF EVIL, BEFORE THEY CAN COMMIT ANY MORE GLUE-RELATED CRIMES! THE TEAM CATCHES ZEMO AND HIS CRONIES AT THE END OF THIS ISSUE, AND HAVE PLENTY OF EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM, BUT IRONICALLY, THERE IS ONLY ONE PROBLEM—THEY JUST CAN'T MAKE IT STICK!

—BARRY "ELMER" DUTTER

MY TRIP TO SEATTLE

BY CRASH BANDICOOT™

1. HERE'S ME DRIVING.

2. HERE'S ME AT THE SPACE NEEDLE.

3. HERE'S ME WITH SOME OF THE GALS AT SEATTLE SLIM'S.

4. HERE'S ME SHOWING OFF MY GAME'S REAL-TIME 3-D WORLD WITH ITS LUSH, ORGANIC ENVIRONMENTS, TONS OF OBSTACLES, SECRET PATHWAYS AND BONUS LEVELS... OUTSIDE OF NINTENDO® HEADQUARTERS.

5. HERE'S ME BEING ESCORTED OFF THE PREMISES BY SECURITY.

MY GAME →

CRASH BANDICOOT

Crash Bandicoot™ PlayStation

Sony's long-awaited entry into the platform game arena. You've never experienced anything quite as sensational as this fully animated cartoon world coming to life. It's flooded with obstacles, enormous levels, unbelievable graphics, detailed real-time lighting, amazing music and sound effects. Packed full of solid gameplay, hidden bonus levels, secret pathways and fiendish traps, this is the "must-have" game of the year. Travel in real time across 3D worlds in over 30 levels of intriguing gameplay with thousands of frames of animation! Interact with hilarious, fully rendered 3D cartoon-animated characters. It's packed with all the classic

MY LOGOS ↓

SONY

NAUGHTY DOG

PlayStation

For game hints call 1-900-933-SONY(7669). The charge is $0.95 per minute. Callers under the age of 18 must get parental permission to call. Touch-tone phone is required. Available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. U.S. only. The Sony Computer Entertainment logo is a trademark of Sony Corporation. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. U R NOT E is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. "Crash Bandicoot" and the Crash Bandicoot logo are trademarks and copyrighted properties of Universal Interactive Studios, Inc. © 1996 Universal Interactive Studios, Inc. Source Code © 1996 Naughty Dog, Inc. Nintendo is a registered trademark of Nintendo of America Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. Screen shots are actual game screens taken from monitors. www.sony.com.

ULTRAGIRL

Listening to Barbara Kesel talk about ULTRAGIRL was like having Indiana Jones burst into my subconscious comic Temple of Doom, open the sealed sarcophagi of my fondest super hero memories and awaken the undead mummies of my misspent youth. As I ran up a $100+ MCI bill being charmed by her adolescent exuberance, pie-in-the-face humor and unbridled imagination, two "may be's" struck me: 1) Barbara's three-part ULTRAGIRL LIMITED SERIES out in November may be the most fun Marvel's printed in eons, and 2) I may be falling in love with her.

Barbara: Ultragirl's a gal named Susie Sherman; 17 years old, high school senior and "A" student. Mom and dad are divorced; mom's a realtor and dad's an entertainment lawyer (typical California family). She is celebrity obsessed. Her entire goal in life is to be a super model/role model. She's not stupid but she is naive. The real world populated by the mutants of the Marvel Universe is completely unknown to her. Her basic philosophy: helping the world is good, but appearing in People magazine afterward is better. What she doesn't know is that she's an alien. A Kree to be exact.

Cool. Alicia Silverstone meets Supergirl. How totally '90s. Barbara's one smart cookie. I like that in a woman...

Barbara: In issue #1, Susie goes on a modeling interview but is turned down because she's just too darned muscular (despite nearly starving herself for a waif-like figure, she, for some reason, keeps growing these ugly muscles, ick!). Of course, her hopes are dashed. But suddenly, a Sentinel's arm crashes through the wall and she's attacked by the giant robot who's accusing her of being a mutant. Before she realizes it, she proceeds to beat the crap out of the Sentinel. She also makes the amazing discovery that she can fly. What we won't find out until later is that Susie was part of a plan by the Kree Supreme Intelligence to breed mutant Kree super agents on Earth. That's why the Sentinel came after her. She is a mutant, just an alien one.

A valley girl discovers she has the powers of Captain Marvel. Poor Susie's whole self-image is shattered. Barbara is so sensitive. I'll bet she likes flowers. Maybe I'll send her some roses...

Barbara: By the time Susie is able to catch her breath and come back to reality she's standing in the middle of a park completely surrounded by TV reporters. Susie's first thought, "Oh, my God, my clothes are a mess and my hair looks awful!" She pulls out her trusty cell phone, calls her dad and says, "I need representation!" At this time, Susie's in her ultra mode, when the word "ultra" is her favorite expression and precedes most everything she says. In no time the media's referring to her as Ultragirl!

So Ultragirl has nothing to do with the Ultraverse. Boy, Barbara sure knows her Marvel continuity. She's like the perfect woman!

Barbara: Susie calls up her girlfriends and they build her a costume complete with a "U" belt buckle (can't forget that trademark). In issue #2 the New Warriors guest-star to help Ultragirl fight her first villain — EFFEX, who's a disgruntled former Hollywood special effects guy who got blacklisted, and since he'll never work in this town again, he's gonna make Southern California burn! In issue #3, the Kree show up and basically tell Ultragirl, "Hey, you work for us. No more of this super hero stuff." Susie's response—"Yeah, right." Then, when the Shi'ar get wind of her, the fun really starts happening!

ULTRAGIRL is the original good girl book. She is a good girl, out to do good things, and tries to be a happy person. She's not one of these "bad girl" characters that seem to be so popular now. Everyone in comics appears to be obsessed with this old-fashioned notion that female super heroes won't sell. They've already decided it won't work so it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Well, I've decided this will work. I'm introducing something Marvel does not have — a super-powered girl. They've got super-powered women, but these women are serious, not fun. Ultragirl is fun.

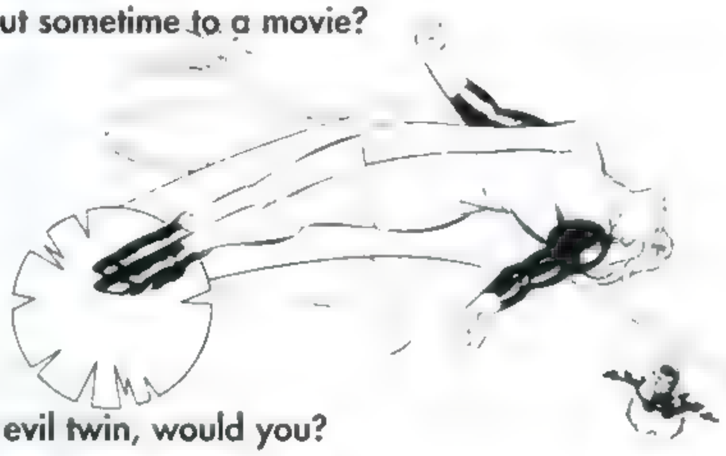
Speaking of fun, how would you like to go out sometime to a movie?

Barbara: Sounds great. Can Karl come along?

Karl?

Barbara: Karl Kesel. My husband.

You're... married. Happily?



Barbara: Very.

Oh. You wouldn't happen to have a sister or evil twin, would you?

—Matt Morra
In therapy for a much needed reality check

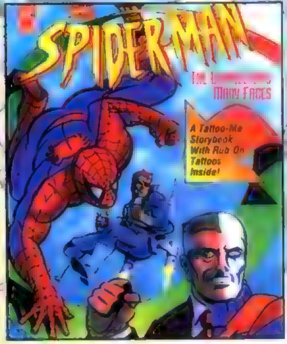
MARVEL STUFF

READ THIS AND WIN A MILLION BUCKS!

Someday, maybe. You didn't think you were going to win a million dollars just by looking at this article, did you? We just needed a hook to get you to stick around as we enter the wide world of Marvel children's books!

With the success of the Spider-Man and X-Men animated series on the Fox Kids Network, Marvel has approached some of the top children's book publishers, including Disney's Funworks, Premier, and Western Publishing to produce engaging and exciting stories that appeal to both children and adults. To that end, these publishers have hired some of the most original and talented creators working in the comic book medium. Artists such as Rick Geary, Ken Steacy, Steven Butler, and Craig Rousseau, and writers like Tom Peyer, Mike Stewart, Mike Teitelbaum, and Geary have left their own individual stamp on Marvel's veteran cast of characters.

Aiding both publisher and creator in their quest to create entertaining and adventurous children's literature is Marvel's Creative Services department. Art Director Mike Thomas and editor Steve Behling are instrumental in assembling a writer/artist team for each project, deciding the story content, and helping the publisher guide each book to retail. "We're trying to create excellent books for children," Thomas said, "while at the same time making sure that these books have an appeal to an adult, comic-book-reading audience as well."



Ken Steacy echoed Thomas' thoughts. "There's so little material for children out there, and these books afford the opportunity to talk to that audience," he said. Steacy believes that while children's books have a different tone from mainstream comics, they share a sensibility that never talks down to the audience, child or adult. His work can be seen in the *GHOSTS, GHOULS AND THE HOBGOBLIN* and *THE CHAMELEON'S MANY FACES*, both by Funworks.

Mike Stewart, the author of several Marvel children's books, including Funworks' *THE CHAMELEON'S MANY FACES*, shares Steacy's approach.

"It's fun writing these characters for children. It harkens back to the early days of Marvel," Stewart said, "with fun, zippy stories where the heroes are definitely good, and the villains are decidedly evil."

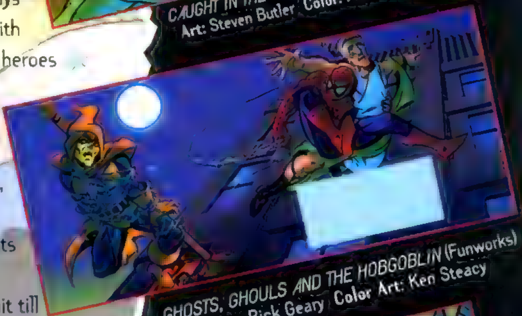
To check out any of the books you see in this article, first thing you need to do is have children. Space prohibits telling you how that's done. Once you have your kids, wait till they're a couple years old, then go to a bookstore near you!

Or you can skip the kids and just get the books; it's your call.

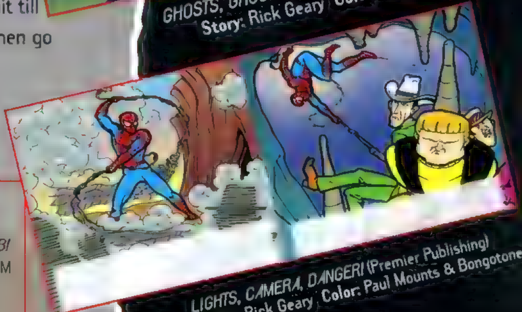
INSET: *THE CHAMELEON'S MANY FACES* (FUNWORKS) BACKGROUND: *BEWARE THE BLOB!* (PREMIER PUBLISHING) STORY: TOM PEYER ART: CRAIG ROUSSEAU COLOR: BONGOTONE!

THE CHAMELEON'S MANY FACES (Funworks) Story: Mike Stewart Color Art: Ken Steacy

CAUGHT IN THE WEB (Western) Story: Mike Teitelbaum Art: Steven Butler Color: Paul Mounts & Bongotone



GHOSTS, GHOULS AND THE HOBGOBLIN (Funworks) Story: Rick Geary Color Art: Ken Steacy

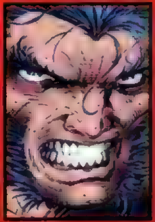


LIGHTS, CAMERA, DANGER! (Premier Publishing) Story & Art: Rick Geary Color: Paul Mounts & Bongotone

TOGETHER AGAIN, FOR THE FIRST TIME

by ROBERT J. SODARO

*In What can Only Be Described as One of the Most Hotly Anticipated Marvel/Image Crossovers, the **X-Men** and the **WildC.A.T.s** Come Together for the Very First Time.*



This February, the seeds will be planted for the team-up of two of the most popular super hero groups in comics. While cross-company team-up books are all the rage these days, what marks the teaming of X-Men and WildC.A.T.s as extra-special is that, prior to co-founding Image, Jim Lee (head of WildStorm Productions over at Image) is perhaps best known for his run on the X-Men (X-MEN #1—which Lee penciled, sold some eight million copies). For Lee, the chance to return to pencil the characters that helped propel him to fame in the industry is admittedly a good time for him (Lee will be penciling the third issue of the series).

The four-issue monthly series kicks off with an Image-produced issue (penciled by Travis Charest), which will be followed with an issue by Marvel, Lee's issue, and finally wind up in Marvel's hands. Each prestige-format issue will be 48 pages in length and feature different members of the team. According to Scott Lobdell, the story covers some 50 years of common history of the two teams, beginning in WWII, and stretching into the near future. Lobdell stated that he plotted the book in this fashion so as to establish some common ground between the groups, rather than simply have them meet for a common threat.

Lobdell chose to place both teams in a single universe where both the X-Men and WildC.A.T.s coexist but haven't met. "Kind of in the same way that X-MEN/TEEN TITANS worked. Having said that it takes place over probably a 50-year period Lee chimed in that so many crossovers are taking place these days that a separate universe should be created to handle all of them. "It would be a lot more coherent," Lee joked. He then added that if such a universe did exist, "there would be more team-up books than regular books."

REINVENTING HISTORY

"It's like a graphic novel type of story in that it is a story that you will be able to keep on the shelves for five or six years," Lobdell stated, talking about the actual form of the story. "Its not a story that takes place right now." He went on to say that as the story was originally conceived prior to the beginnings of Onslaught, its ultimate outcome will not be affected by that ongoing storyline. Lobdell (with Lee) set up the story in such a way that different characters will star in each of the four issues.

The first story takes place during WWII, where Wolverine and Zealot first meet. The next issue features the lime-green, miniskirted Jean Grey/Neal Adams X-MEN team who meet up with Grifter from WildC.A.T.s. The third issue delivers a current-day incarnation of both teams, while the fourth one sends them into a future that is drawn on the X-Man classic *"Days of Future Past"* storyline.

"I wanted to do a crossover that spanned a length of time that showed the evolution of the X-Men and WildC.A.T.s," Lee said, "because there really isn't a past so we'd be making it up—not that we're not making up everything," he said chuckling. "In X-Men I wanted to have the opportunity to play around with different versions of the team from different eras. The part I'm supposed to draw involves characters from [Dave] Cockrum's run on the comic. Stuff that I hadn't done before." Lee picked this era, as he felt that simply going back on the book and drawing it again would have been repetitive.

In recalling the origins of the proposal itself, Lobdell stated, "I think it originally was Jim and me together with Terry Stewart a few years ago. I wrote the plot for the first issue." Lobdell said that while he really would like to finish the project off, his current commitments with X-MEN, UNCANNY X-MEN, GENERATION X and IRON MAN make it look like he might not be able to finish it off.

While Lee expressed his desire that Lobdell be able to complete the project they started together, he realized that Lobdell's prior commitments take priority. "I don't think I'll have too much trouble finding someone to write it [if Scott couldn't]"; for his own part, Lobdell also wanted to complete the project, but looking realistically at his upcoming deadlines, wasn't sure that he could fit everything in without something suffering. As of this writing, there was no official word from Marvel as to whether or not Lobdell would complete the writing chores or, who would finish it (were he not able to complete the tale).

WHY CROSSOVERS

In spite of the fact that there currently is an avalanche of cross-company team-ups, there will be those who feel that the current rage is getting way out of hand. Not so, according to Lee, who feels that there is a very viable need in the industry for such team-ups. "I think there is a real need to create excitement in the industry. To create events that are a big deal." To those people who roll their eyes skywards at the mere mention of yet another crossover, Lee said, "You might as well say, 'Oh gosh, here's another comicbook!' There are certainly crossovers that are successful and well done, and there are others that are just banged out. That's for the reader to decide."

For his part, Lee likes to choose pairings based,

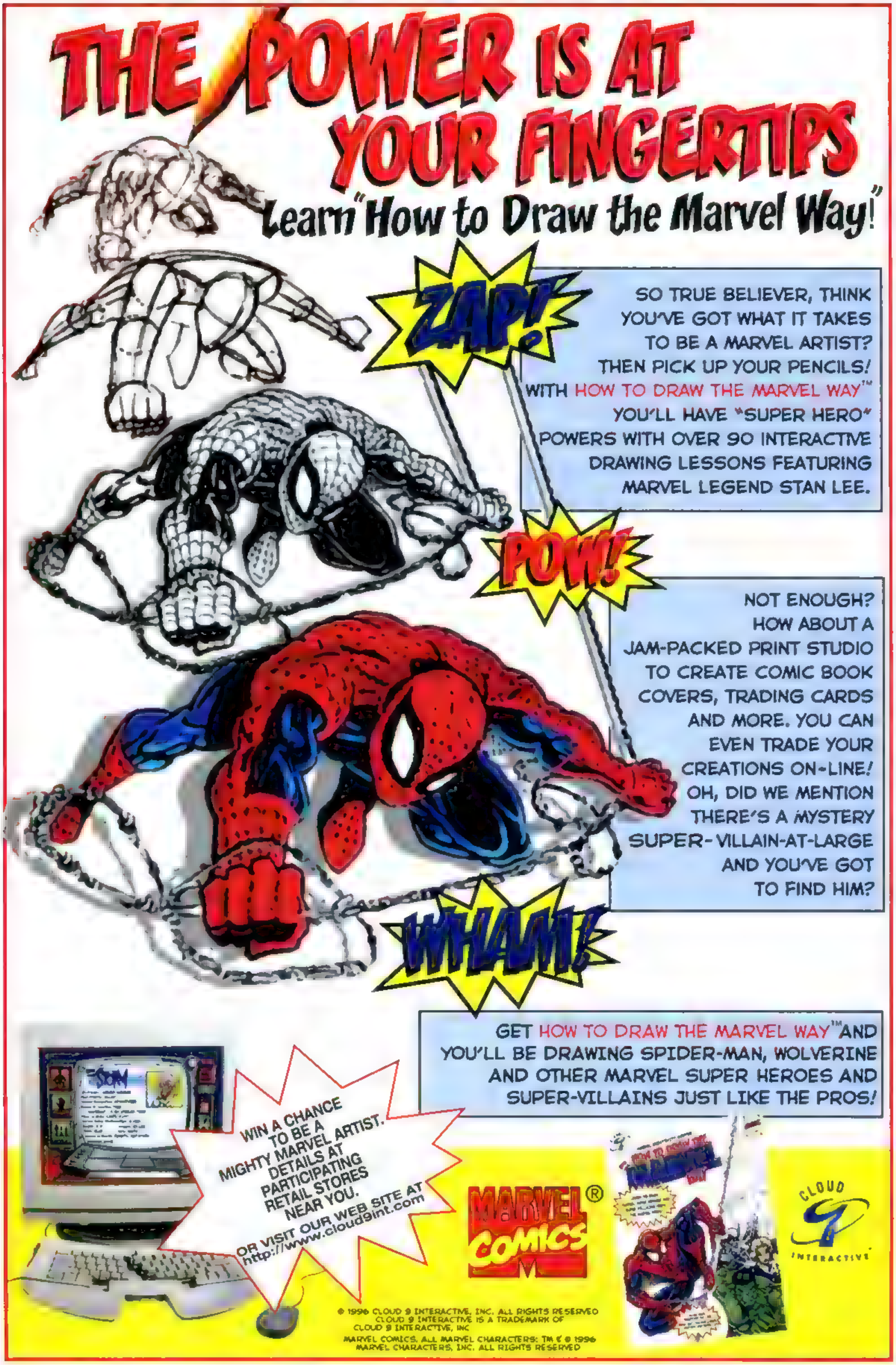
first and foremost, on whether or not he's got a solid story to tell. "When crossovers are put together, people just basically say, I've always wanted to do this, or this would be a good project to do." Rather than just do something for the money, Lee attempts to see if there is a story or some possible connection between the characters. "Certainly within the WildC.A.T.s/X-Men crossover, there's a creator's connection. Scott and I have worked together, plus I worked on both these teams."

Beyond the connections that Lee and Lobdell individually share with each other and the characters, there's a good story connection between the two groups of characters themselves. "You have similarities in the teams," Lee stated. "How will this team interact with the other?" Still another way of approaching crossovers, according to Lee, is to do disparate characters, "...like Grifter/Mask or Batman/Gen13 (the first came out over the summer, while the second is due later this year). "Characters that you wouldn't normally put together, and the interesting stuff comes out of the fact that they aren't similar."

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER SPIN

Yet another way to approach the inter-company crossover is to meld the twin universes, as Image and Valiant did in '92 (DeathMate) and Marvel and DC did this year (Amalgam). Yet, despite the fact that he did participate in the DeathMate melded-verse, Lee is no fan of them. "I'd rather just do straight crossovers. From a creator's standpoint, for me to draw it, to play around with other characters, to create hybrids...it is just not the same thing." With all of the current crossovers currently occurring, what would Lee like to see in the future? "I'd like to do a Marvel/DC/ Image crossover."

Still, while Lee is definitely a fan of the genre (it not only allows him access to characters he enjoys, but would otherwise never get the opportunity to draw, it also gives other creators access to the WildStorm characters so he gets to see how others would handle them), he realizes that there is an upward limit to the number of times the various companies can play this game out. "It's absolutely going to play itself out. There's definitely overkill right now, but I still don't think that invalidates a story or a project that's well done. I think there'll always be crossovers. Just not as many as there are now. Maybe we'll be a little more discriminating about them than we are now."



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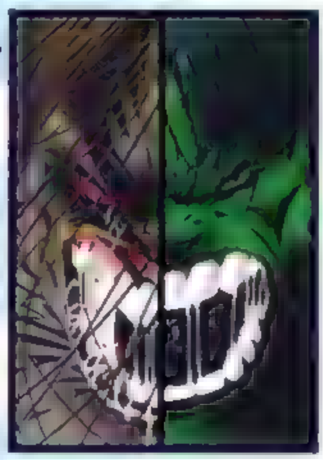
TWO REASONS WHY KAREN PAGE IS P.O.'D AT MATT MURDOCK: 1) HE'S SPENDING WAAAAY TOO MUCH TIME WITH HIS EX-LOVE, THE BLACK WIDOW; 2) HIS RUN-IN WITH THE EX-AVENGER IS LEADING HIM CLOSER TO THE TRUTH CONCERNING KAREN'S NEW JOB AT THE RADIO STATION OWNED BY THE KINGPIN! *(THIS MONTH, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR ALSO APPEARS IN DAREDEVIL/BATMAN.)*

FANTASTIC FOUR NO.5
JIM LEE & BRANDON CHOI/JIM LEE/ SCOTT WILLIAMS
THE FF VS. DR. DOOM, 'NUFF SAID! AT LONG LAST, IT'S THE BATTLE THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR! OUR FEARLESS FOURSOME FACE OFF AGAINST THE DASTARDLY DOCTOR DOOM! PLUS: THE SECRET OF WYATT WINGFOOT REVEALED!



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PETER DAVID/DALE KEOWN
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FEATURING THE RETURN OF THE NEW WARRIORS! ULTRA GIRL DOESN'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE: THE SHI'AR CONTRACT ON HER HEAD, THE SPECIAL EFFECTS MASTER TURNED SUPER-VILLAIN KNOWN AS EFFEX, OR THE CRUSH THAT'S BREAKING HER HEART! IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOUR BASIC TEENAGE MUTANT KREE GIRL!

ON SALE JANUARY 8

CAPTAIN AMERICA NO.5
ROB LIEFELD & JEPH LOEB/ROB LIEFELD/JONATHAN SIBAL
IN THE AFTERMATH OF HIS BATTLE WITH THE WORLD PARTY, THE SUPER SOLDIER AND BUCKY MUST REGROUP TO FACE THE THREAT OF CROSSBONES!

ELEKTRA/WITCHBLADE
CHRISTINA Z./MIKE TURNER/D. TRON
"DEVIL'S REIGN" PART 6 OF 8
THE MARVEL/TOP COW CROSSOVER CONTINUES! LEAPING FROM THE PAGES OF WOLVERINE/WITCHBLADE, MEPHISTO'S CAMPAIGN OF CORRUPTION RAGES ON AS TWO OF COMICDOM'S HOTTEST HEROINES COLLIDE! IN PART SIX, ELEKTRA MEETS UP WITH WITCHBLADE! REMEMBER, MEPHISTO, HELL HATH NO FURY LIKE *TWO WOMEN SCORNED!* **CHRISTINA Z., MIKE TURNER** AND **D. TRON**–THE CREATIVE TEAM BEHIND WITCHBLADE, UNLEASH THIS 32-PAGE BLOCKBUSTER! DON'T MISS A SINGLE CHAPTER OF "DEVIL'S REIGN", THE EIGHT-PART INTERCOMPANY CROSSOVER UNITING THE HOTTEST CHARACTERS AND TALENTS OF MARVEL AND TOP COW!

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ODIN IS PREPARED TO REVEAL THE SECRETS TO RESTORING THE LOST GODS, BUT BEFORE HE CAN, THE MYSTERIOUS MEN IN BLACK ATTACK! NOW ODIN IS KIDNAPPED AND BALDAR & CO. MUST BATTLE SETH TO RESTORE THEIR ASGARDIAN GLORY!

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DAREDEVIL/BATMAN
D.G. CHICHESTER/SCOTT MCDANIEL
IT'S BILLY CLUB VS. BATARANG WHEN DD MEETS THE DARK KNIGHT! WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, DAREDEVIL AND BATMAN HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. BOTH LOST THEIR PARENTS AT A YOUNG AGE, BOTH PROWL URBAN JUNGLES, AND BOTH STRIKE FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF SUPERSTITIOUS AND COWARDLY CRIMINALS. SO WHY ARE THEY AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS? MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE BATMAN HAS CHASED TWO-FACE AND MR. HYDE INTO THE BIG APPLE AND IS SOON TO LEARN THAT HE'S NOT IN GOTHAM CITY ANYMORE! A 48-PAGE BOOKSHELF FEATURING THE DREAM TEAM-UP BETWEEN THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR AND THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE!

INCREDIBLE HULK NO.451

PETER DAVID/MIKE DEODATO JR./TOM WEGRZYN

THE HULK TAKES OVER AN ENTIRE ISLAND-AND ALL ITS INHABITANTS! WITH THE LIVES OF OVER 1,000 HOSTAGES IN THE BALANCE, THERE'S NO WAY THE GOVERNMENT WILL NUKE THE HULK AGAIN-RIGHT? *(THIS MONTH, THE GREEN GOLIATH ALSO APPEARS IN INCREDIBLE HULK/PITT, AVENGERS #5 AND SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP #6.)*

IRON MAN NO.5

JIM LEE & SCOTT LOBDELL/WHILCE PORTACIO/SCOTT WILLIAMS

HOLD ON TO YOUR HATS, WHIRLWIND BLOWS INTO TOWN. AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP HIM IS TONY STARK?! YEP, TONY'S SEPARATED FROM HIS ARMOR, WITH ONLY HIS WITS TO PROTECT HIM! MEANWHILE, MADAM HYDRA PREPARES TO PAY A FEARSOME PRICE! PLUS: EVENTS BEGIN HERE THAT LEAD INTO NEXT MONTH'S "HEROES REBORN" CROSSOVER!

PUNISHER NO.17

JOHN OSTRANDER/TOM LYLE/ROBERT JONES

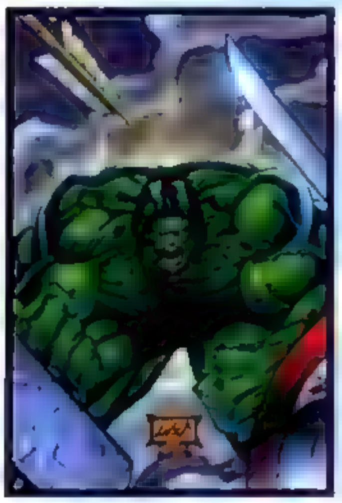
IN LAST ISSUE'S EXPLOSIVE FINALE, THE MUTANT LIBERATION FRONT COMPLEX BLEW SKY HIGH, TAKING THE PUNISHER WITH IT! IS FRANK CASTLE REALLY DEAD THIS TIME? ARE WE FACING A WORLD WITHOUT A PUNISHER? OR WILL THE X-CUTIONER TAKE ON THE ROLE HIMSELF? FIND OUT IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE WHICH REVEALS THE PUNISHER'S IMPACT ON THE MARVEL UNIVERSE THROUGH THE EYES OF GUEST-STARS LIKE DAREDEVIL, DOC SAMSON AND SPIDER-MAN!

WHAT IF? NO.95
STARRING GHOST RIDER

IVAN VELEZ JR./ERIC BATTLE

TONIGHT THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE WILL HAND OUT GRIM JUSTICE TO A SERIAL KILLER! A KILLER WHO HAPPENS TO BE NAMED DANNY KETCH!

ON SALE JANUARY 22



2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW NO.7

BEN RAAB & JOE KELLY/JASON ARMSTRONG & DAVID BREWER/JAIME MENDOZA & ROB HUNTER

SPIDER-MAN 2099 HAS TO FIND HIS BROTHER BEFORE DOOM DOES, A BROTHER THAT JUST HAPPENS TO BE THE MANIACAL GREEN GOBLIN! PLUS: THE RETURN OF A 2099 FAVORITE THAT MIGHT MEAN THE END OF ONE OF THE FUTUREVERSE'S NEWEST STARS!

AVENGERS NO.5

ROB LIEFELD/CHAP YAEP/JONATHAN SIBAL

THIS IS IT, FIGHT FANS! IT'S THE INCREDIBLE CONCLUSION TO THE BONE-BREAKIN' BATTLE BETWEEN THE MIGHTY AVENGERS AND THE SAVAGE HULK!

ELEKTRA NO.5

PETER MILLIGAN/MIKE DEODATO JR.

ELEKTRA IS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO MEET WITH THE SPIRIT OF HER DEAD FATHER. THE ONLY THING STANDING IN HER WAY: AN ARMY OF BLOODTHIRSTY ASSASSINS! *(THIS MONTH, ELEKTRA ALSO APPEARS IN ELEKTRA/WITCHBLADE.)*

GLADIATOR/SUPREME

KEITH GIFFEN/ANDY SMITH

THE IMPERIAL GUARD BUTT-KICKER MEETS EXTREME'S UBER-MAN! GLADIATOR, THE SHI'AR EMPIRE'S PRIDE AND JOY, HAS KNOCKED OUT COLOSSUS AND SINGLE-HANDEDLY WIPED THE FLOOR WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR. THE POWER OF SUPREME, ROB LIEFELD'S STRANGE VISITOR FROM ANOTHER PLANET, KNOWS NO LIMITS! WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE TITANS OF TWO UNIVERSES TUSSLE IN THIS 48-PAGE BOOKSHELF BLOCKBUSTER? KNOWING KEITH GIFFEN, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE PRETTY!

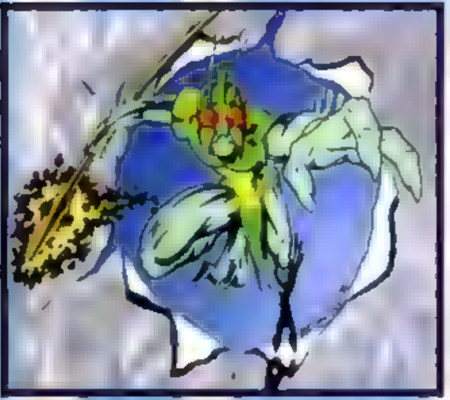
SILVER SURFER/WEAPON ZERO

BRIAN HOLGUIN/JOE BENITEZ/AARON SOWD

"DEVIL'S REIGN" PART 8 OF 8

THE EXPLOSIVE CONCLUSION TO THE MARVEL/TOP COW CROSSOVER! STREAKING FROM THE PAGES OF ELEKTRA/CYBLADE, THE FINAL BATTLE ERUPTS AS MEPHISTO MAKES HIS BID TO BECOME THE HEAD DEMONIC HONCHO OF THE TOP COW UNIVERSE! NOW, SILVER SURFER, THE DARK LORD'S ARCH-FOE, MAKES THE SCENE AND IS JOINED BY THE ALIEN ARMED TEAM KNOWN AS WEAPON ZERO! HAS MEPHISTO ULTIMATELY CORRUPTED HIGH-PROFILE HEROES? WHAT LASTING IMPACT WILL THIS SERIES HAVE ON BOTH UNIVERSES? FIND OUT IN THE CLOSING CHAPTER OF "DEVIL'S REIGN!"

ON SALE JANUARY 29



BUG!
TODD DEZAGO/DEREC AUCOIN
FROM THE PAGES OF CABLE LEAPS THE MICRONAUT KNOWN AS BUG! THE SWASHBUCKLING INSECT WARRIOR FROM INNER SPACE STARS IN HIS OWN 48-PAGE ONE-SHOT! COME ALONG ON BUG'S WILD RIDE THROUGH TIME AS HE ATTEMPTS TO FOIL THE MAD SCHEMES OF ANNIHILUS! WHEN BUG POPS INTO SOME STRANGELY FAMILIAR MOMENTS IN MARVEL HISTORY, YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF, "IS BUG RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ORIGINS OF THE X-MEN, THE HULK, DAREDEVIL AND SPIDER-MAN?!"

IMPERIAL GUARD NO.3 (OF 3)
BRIAN AUGUSTYN/CHUCK WOJTKIEWICZ
THE FINAL CHAPTER IN THE ALL-NEW LIMITED SERIES STARRING THE IMPERIAL GUARD!

KISSNATION NO.1
VARIOUS
AS THE SOLD-OUT TOUR RIPS ACROSS AMERICA, ALL THOSE MEMBERS OF THE KISS ARMY CAN ROCK 'N ROLL ALL NIGHT AND PARTY EVERY DAY WITH THIS ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT KISS EXTRAVAGANZA! DEVELOPED WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE BAND, KISSNATION FEATURES EXCLUSIVE ARTICLES, RARE PHOTOS AND AN EXPLOSIVE 45-PAGE COMIC STARRING THE SUPER-POWERED KISS AND THE UNCANNY X-MEN IN A TALE PLOTTED BY **GENE SIMMONS** AND **PAUL STANLEY**, WITH A SCRIPT BY **STAN "THE MAN" LEE!** THIS 96-PAGE ONE-SHOT FEATURES A GATEFOLD POSTER BY KISS ALBUM **ARTIST KEN KELLEY!**

SILVER SURFER NO.126
J.M. DEMATTEIS/RON GARNEY/BOB WIACEK
BEGINNING AN ALL-NEW ERA OF MYSTERY IN THE LIFE OF THE SILVER SURFER! ON THE HEELS OF HIS WAR WITH THE HULK, THE SKY-RIDER FINDS HIMSELF IN A PERPLEXING PREDICAMENT. HE REMEMBERS THAT HE WAS FRIENDS WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND THE AVENGERS, BUT THEIR DISAPPEARANCE TRIGGERS NO EMOTION. PERHAPS DOCTOR STRANGE CAN CURE THIS MYSTERIOUS MALADY! J.M. DEMATTEIS (SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN) AND RON GARNEY (CAPTAIN AMERICA) SEND THE SURFER ON A TREK TO REGAIN HIS HUMANITY IN THIS "JUMP-ON" ISSUE! (THIS MONTH, THE SILVER SURFER ALSO APPEARS IN SILVER SURFER/WEAPON ZERO.)

ON SALE JANUARY

MARVEL VISION NO.16
MARVEL VISION IS YOUR BACKSTAGE PASS TO THE ENTIRE MARVEL UNIVERSE! THIS 64-PAGE, FULL-COLOR MAGAZINE FEATURES PART TWO OF A TWO-PART INTERVIEW WITH STEVE SKROCE (THE NEW AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ARTIST), "MARVEL MEMORIES" WITH ANDY KUBERT, A HULK "TIME SLIP" BY TONY SALMONS, AND MORE COOL STUFF THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A DEAD CLONE AT! IF YOU WANT TO GET PUMPED FOR THE HOUSE OF IDEAS' UPCOMING OFFERINGS, MAKE SURE YOU CHECK OUT MARVEL VISION #16! (NOTE: THIS ISSUE INCLUDES CUSTOMER ORDER FORMS WHICH ARE FOR APRIL 1997 SHIPPING PRODUCTS.)

ON SALE JANUARY 2

THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN NO.14
TODD DEZAGO/MIKE WIERINGO/RICHARD CASE
SPIDEY'S ADVENTURE WITH KA-ZAR CONTINUES! THE WEB-SLINGER AND THE VINE SWINGER DISCOVER THAT ROXXON IS BEHIND THE DEVASTATION OF THE SAVAGE LAND! BUT WHEN OUR HEROES SHUT DOWN THE OPERATION, THAT NASTY COMPANY PULLS OUT THE RINGERS TO CRUSH THE DO-GOODERS, HIRED MOOKS LIKE THE MOLE MAN'S MONSTERS AND THE HULK!

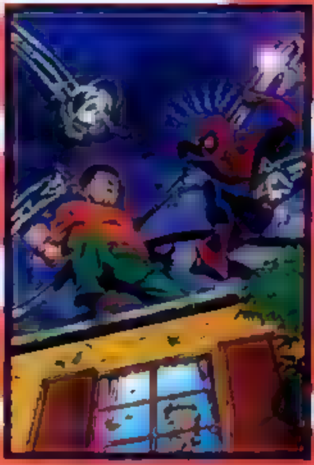
SPIDER-MAN/BATMAN
J.M. DEMATTEIS/MARK BAGLEY
AVAILABLE AGAIN! GET REVVED FOR DAREDEVIL/BATMAN AS THE WEBBED WONDER AND OL' POINTY EARS TEAM UP TO TANGLE WITH CARNAGE AND THE JOKER IN THIS 48-PAGE ONE-SHOT!

ART FROM HOBGOBLIN LIVES

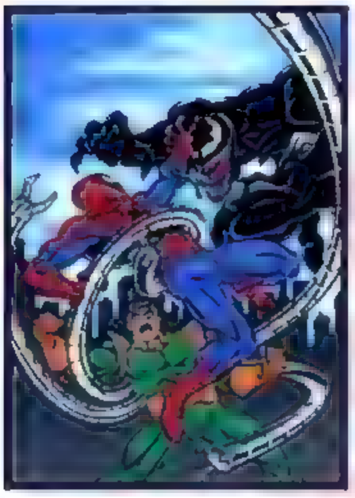
SPIDER-MAN: HOBGOBLIN LIVES! NO.3 (OF 3)
ROGER STERN/RON FRENZ/GEORGE PEREZ
REVEALED: THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL HOBGOBLIN!
THIS IS IT, THE ISSUE FANS HAVE WAITED 10 YEARS TO READ! THE ORIGINAL HOBGOBLIN IS UNMASKED AND HIS DARK HISTORY IS FINALLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT! ADD A KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT, LIFE-AND-DEATH BATTLE, THROW IN A DRAMATIC TURNING POINT IN THE LIFE OF BETTY BRANT AND YOU KNOW YOU HAVE A "MUST READ" CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF SPIDER-MAN!

UNCANNY ORIGINS NO.7
STARRING VENOM
BOB BUDIANSKY/DAVE HOOVER
HE'S TAKING THE STAND IN VENOM: ON TRIAL, SO NOW'S THE PERFECT TIME TO FILL THE CURIOUS IN ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE SYMBIOTIC PSYCHO WHO'S MADE IT HIS MISSION TO TORMENT THE EVER AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

ON SALE JANUARY 8



THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN NO.421
TOM DEFALCO/STEVE SKROCE/BUD LAROSA
INTRODUCING NEW SUPPORTING CAST MEMBERS AND THE VILLAINESS CALLED DRAGONFLY! PLUS: A SHOCKING SUBPLOT BEGINS WHEN A DE-POWERED ELEKTRO IS KIDNAPPED BY MYSTERIOUS FORCES!



UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN NO.19
KURT BUSIEK/PAT OLLIFFE/AL WILLIAMSON
THE LATE, LAMENTED DOCTOR OCTOPUS MAKES HIS UNTOLD TALES DEBUT! ON THE LAM FROM THE LAW, OTTO OCTAVIUS LAYS LOW IN PETER PARKER'S FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD–MISTAKE! GET YOUR BARGAIN-PRICED RINGSIDE SEAT TO SEE SPIDEY TANGLE WITH ONE OF HIS MOST INFAMOUS (AND MISSED) FOES!

ON SALE JANUARY 15

THE ADVENTURES OF SPIDER-MAN NO.12
GLENN GREENBERG/ALEX SAVIUK/ROB STULL
THE MANIACAL MIND OF DOC OCK PLUS THE BRUTAL BRAWN OF VENOM ADDS UP TO DEADLY DEFEAT FOR SPIDER-MAN! SPIDEY TAKES ON DOUBLE TROUBLE IN THIS 99 CENT ISSUE!

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN NO.78
HOWARD MACKIE/JOHN ROMITA JR./SCOTT HANNA
THIS UNIQUE ISSUE FEATURES A SPECIAL VIEW OF SPIDER-MAN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WOMAN WHO LOVES HIM, MARY JANE PARKER. WE ALL KNOW SPIDEY'S A HERO, BUT WHAT WILL HIS WIFE DO WHEN TERRORISTS SEIZE CONTROL OF A BUILDING ON THE E.S.U. CAMPUS?!

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN TPB
NEW COVER BY PAT OLLIFFE
KURT BUSIEK/PAT OLLIFFE/AL VEY
COLLECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME: ISSUES #1-8 OF THE HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED SERIES, UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN! EXPERIENCE THE UNSURE BUT EXHILARATING FIRST DAYS OF SPIDER-MAN'S LEGENDARY CAREER! PLUS: THIS 176-PAGE COLLECTION PLACES KURT BUSIEK AND PAT OLLIFFE'S STORIES IN THEIR PROPER HISTORICAL CONTEXT THROUGH THE USE OF NEW CHAPTER DIVIDERS INCORPORATING ART AND TEXT FROM THE EARLIEST ISSUES OF STAN LEE AND STEVE DITKO'S AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

ART FROM SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

ON SALE JANUARY 22

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN NO.244
J.M. DEMATTEIS/LUKE ROSS/JOHN STANISCI
IT'S PART THREE OF SPIDER-MAN'S CLASH WITH HIS FIRST FOE, THE CHAMELEON! IT'S SPIDEY VS. HIS FACELESS NEMESIS WITH THE LIVES OF DR. KAFKA AND JOHN JAMESON AT STAKE! PLUS: ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE, IT'S THE RETURN OF THE HOPPING-MAD KANGAROO!

ON SALE JANUARY 29

SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP NO.6
GUEST-STARRING THE HULK & DOCTOR STRANGE
PAINTED COVER BY BOB LARKIN
LARRY HAMA & J.M. DEMATTEIS/BOB MCLEOD/TOM PALMER
SPECIAL 64-PAGE MONSTER MASH ISSUE! IT'S TWO TERRIFYING TALES IN ONE BIG BOOK! FIRST, SPIDEY SWINGS HEAD-FIRST INTO THE MEANER, SURLIER, POST-ONSLAUGHT HULK! THEN, THE WALL-CRAWLER AND THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS UNITE TO COMBAT THE UNDYING, BLOOD-SUCKING EVIL THAT IS DRACULA!

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN '97
GLENN HERDLING/SHAWN MCMANUS
THE ORIGINAL MARVEL ZOMBIE RISES AGAIN! CALYPSO, KRAVEN'S EX-LOVER, POSSESSES THE BODY OF THE *DAILY BUGLE*'S GLORY GRANT IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO REVIVE HER OWN CORPSE! STANDING IN HER WAY: SPIDER-MAN, SHOTGUN, AND THE WALKING DEAD MAN, SIMON GARTH! IT'S 48 PAGES OF SPINE-TINGLING ACTION, FEATURING THE ART OF SHAWN MCMANUS (SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN '96)!

VENOM: ON TRIAL NO.1 (OF 3)
LARRY HAMA/JOSH HOOD/DEREK FISHER
IT'S THE MARVEL MEDIA CIRCUS OF THE DECADE AS VENOM IS FINALLY PUT ON TRIAL FOR HIS CRIMES! EDDIE HAS TWO OPTIONS TO WIN HIS FREEDOM: HE CAN SUBMIT TO JUDGMENT BY A JURY OF HIS PEERS OR HE CAN TRY TO BREAK OUT OF THE MOST MISBEGOTTEN PRISON THIS SIDE OF THE ROCK–GUESS WHICH CHOICE HE MAKES!
(THIS MONTH, VENOM ALSO APPEARS IN UNCANNY ORIGINS #[illegible])

ON SALE JANUARY 2

CABLE NO.41

TODD DEZAGO/TBD/SCOTT HANNA

GUEST-STARRING BISHOP! WITH RECENT EVENTS INDICATING THAT BOTH THEIR HELLISH FUTURES ARE COMING CLOSER TO FRUITION, IT'S HIGH TIME FOR A "FREEDOM FIGHTERS FROM THE FUTURE" POWWOW BETWEEN CABLE AND BISHOP! UNFORTUNATELY, THEY'RE INTERRUPTED BY ANOTHER TEMPORAL ANOMALY, THE CYBORG ASSASSIN KNOWN AS SINSEAR!

SABRETOOTH & MYSTIQUE NO.4 (OF 4)

JORGE GONZALEZ/ARIEL OLIVETTI

CONCLUDING THE SAGA THAT EXPLODES FROM THE PAGES OF X-FACTOR! SABRETOOTH AND MYSTIQUE HAVE CATALYST (THE MAN WHO TORTURED DESTINY) RIGHT WHERE THEY WANT HIM! WILL DESTINY'S PREDICTIONS COME TRUE–AND CAN MYSTIQUE DRAG SABRETOOTH BACK TO X-FACTOR AFTER THEY FINISH THEIR DIRTY DEEDS?

UNCANNY X-MEN NO.342

SCOTT LOBDELL/JOE MADUREIRA/TIM TOWNSEND

A THREE-PART SCI-FI BLOCKBUSTER BEGINS HERE! ROGUE, GAMBIT, BISHOP AND THE BEAST DISCOVER THAT AN EVIL FORCE IS CUTTING A SWATH OF DESTRUCTION THROUGH THE HEART OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE! BUT WHEN THE X-MEN TRAVEL THROUGH A STARGATE, THEY DISCOVER THE KEY SHI'AR OUPOST IN RUINS, AND LEARN FROM A BATTLE-WOUNDED DEATHBIRD THAT THEY ARRIVED TOO LATE TO PREVENT THE DEATH OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD!

ON SALE JANUARY 8

THE ADVENTURES OF THE X-MEN NO.12

RALPH MACCHIO/ROBERTO FLORES/RALPH CABRERA

THE M'KRAAN CRYSTAL IS EXPANDING, THREATENING TO SHATTER ALL REALITY! IT LOOKS LIKE NOT EVEN THE X-MEN CAN HALT THE "AGE OF APOCALYPSE!"

GENERATION X NO.25

SCOTT LOBDELL/CHRIS BACHALO

DOUBLE-SIZED ANNIVERSARY ISSUE! BLACK TOM CASSIDY STAGES A BARBAROUS ATTACK ON BANSHEE AND THE WHITE QUEEN, DETERMINED TO TAKE CONTROL OF GENERATION X!

PROFESSOR X & THE X-MEN NO.17

JORGE GONZALEZ/NICK GNAZZO/IAN AKIN

WHEN THE X-MEN RESCUE THE BEAST FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE SENTINELS, THEY GET THE LOWDOWN ON HIS UNCANNY ORIGIN!

X-FACTOR NO.132

HOWARD MACKIE/JEFF MATSUDA/ART THIBERT

STARTING AN ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT STATUS QUO FOR X-FACTOR! FORGE AND THE REST OF X-FACTOR FINALLY BREAK AWAY FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND HEAD UNDERGROUND AS A COVERT MUTANT FORCE! HAVE THEY STOPPED THE MUTANT-HUNTING "HOUND" PROGRAM OR JUST KICKED IT INTO HIGH GEAR?

ON SALE JANUARY 15

EXCALIBUR NO.107

BEN RAAB/SALVADOR LARROCA/SCOTT KOBLISH

A NEW CREATIVE TEAM! A NEW DIRECTION!

WHO ARE THE NEW FOES WHO RISE TO HAUNT THE LIVES OF EXCALIBUR? FIND OUT AS BEN RAAB (AVENGERS), SALVADOR LARROCA (GHOST RIDER) AND SCOTT KOBLISH (CAPTAIN AMERICA) JUMP ONBOARD TO USHER IN A NEW ERA FOR THE EUROPEAN WING OF THE X-MEN!

X-MAN NO.25

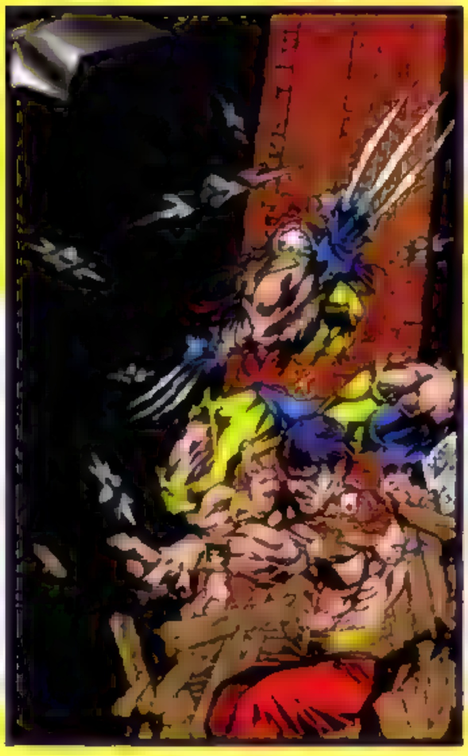
TERRY KAVANAGH/ROGER CRUZ/BUD LAROSA

THE MOST EXPLOSIVE EVENT IN THE LIFE OF X-MAN SINCE HE ESCAPED THE "AGE OF APOCALYPSE"! O.K., GET OUT YOUR SCORECARDS: ON ONE SIDE WE HAVE MADELYNE, THE CLONE OF JEAN GREY, REPOWERED AND FULLY EVIL. ON THE OTHER WE HAVE CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX, THE MAN SHE MARRIED AND THE WOMAN SHE WAS BASED UPON. IN THE MIDDLE WE HAVE NATE GREY, THE ALTERNATE VERSION OF THE SON OF CYCLOPS AND MADELYNE. NOW THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN AND THE ULTIMATE FAMILY FEUD HAS BEGUN! BUT ON WHOSE SIDE WILL NATE STAND? HIS DECISION COULD JEOPARDIZE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE X-MEN FOR ALL TIME! IT'S A 48-PAGE BLOWOUT THAT WILL REDEFINE NATE'S PLACE ON THE MUTANT MAP!

X-MEN NO.62

SCOTT LOBDELL/CARLOS PACHECO

CARLOS PACHECO & SHANG-CHI ARE HERE FOR AN ALL-NEW THREE-PART STORY! THAT'S RIGHT, THE WIZARD "UP & COMING CREATOR" WHO WOWED READERS IN EXCALIBUR AND FANTASTIC FOUR JOINS THE X-TEAM! NOW THAT MADELYNE PRYOR IS BACK AS THE NEW BLACK QUEEN, SEBASTIAN SHAW IS DETERMINED TO BRING TOGETHER THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB! THE X-MEN, WITH GUEST-STAR MASTER OF KUNG FU, SHANG CHI, ARE FORCED TO INTERVENE WHEN SHAW FINDS HIMSELF IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE NEWLY-EVOLVING HAND!



ON SALE JANUARY 22

DOMINO NO.3 (OF 3)

BEN RAAB/DAVID PERRIN

LEAPING FROM THE PAGES OF CABLE! DOMINO HAS COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH HER EX-HUSBAND'S ABDUCTOR, THE PSYCHO CYBORG, DONALD PIERCE! NOW SHE HAS TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS IN THE FINAL BATTLE WITH THIS MUTANT-HATING MADMAN! PLUS: WHAT IS THE FATE OF DOMINO'S FIRST LOVE? MORE SECRETS ARE REVEALED IN THE CONCLUDING CHAPTER TO THIS ALL-NEW THREE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES!

WOLVERINE NO.111

LARRY HAMA/ANTHONY WINN/DAN GREEN

A SPECIAL "JUMP-ON" ISSUE OF WOLVERINE! WITH PROFESSOR X GONE, LOGAN DECIDES IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE OF LOCALES AND MOVES INTO NEW YORK CITY! HERE HE'LL ENCOUNTER AN INVOLVING AND EVOLVING SUPPORTING CAST AS WELL AS AN ULTIMATE NEMESIS THAT WILL PLAGUE HIM THROUGHOUT '97!

X-FORCE NO.64

JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/ADAM POLLINA

AT THE BEHEST OF NATHANIEL RICHARDS, X-FORCE HAS INVADED THE STRANGE NATION OF LATVERIA IN ORDER TO ENSURE NONE OF DOCTOR DOOM'S MANY TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS-ESPECIALLY THE TIME PLATFORM-FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS! NOW THEY FIND THEMSELVES CAUGHT BETWEEN LATVERIAN PATRIOTS AND THE SUPER-SPY ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS S.H.I.E.L.D.!

X-MEN UNLIMITED NO.14

TERRY KAVANAGH/JIMMY CHEUNG

A SPECIAL ONSLAUGHT FALL-OUT ISSUE! AFTER WITNESSING THE "DEATH" OF HIS FAMILY, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, IN ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE, YOUNG FRANKLIN FINALLY DEALS WITH THE LOSS BY SEEKING "JOSEPH", THE MUTANT FORMERLY KNOWN AS MAGNETO. BUT IT SEEMS EVEN THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM CAN'T UNDO THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY ONSLAUGHT, WHICH ONLY UPSETS FRANKLIN. DIDN'T ANYONE TELL MAGNUS NOT TO UPSET A KID WHO HAS THE POWER TO BEND REALITY AT HIS WHIM?!

ON SALE JANUARY 29

DEADPOOL NO.3

JOE KELLY/ED MCGUINNESS/NATHAN MASSENGILL

THE MERC-WITH-THE-MOUTH THINKS HE'S ON THE TRAIL OF BLACK TOM CASSIDY, THE MAN WHO MADE HIS LIFE HELL IN HIS SECOND LIMITED SERIES. BUT IS THERE POSSIBLY SOMEONE BEHIND THE SCENES YANKING DEADPOOL'S CHAIN? COULD BE! PLUS: A SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE BY X-FORCE'S SIRYN!

ART FROM THE GENERATION X PRESS POSTER!

BY JORDAN RASKIN AND KEVIN NOWLAN.

SEE YOUR RETAILER FOR MORE INFORMATION

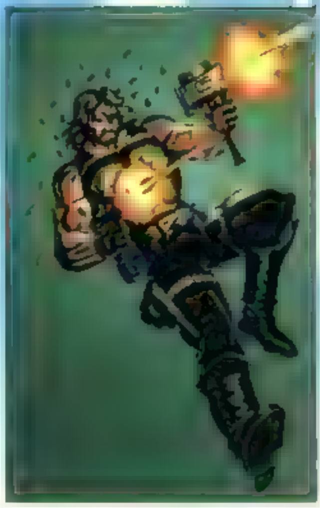
ON SALE JANUARY 15

DOCTOR WHO NO.248

VARIOUS

THE OFFICIAL, FULL-COLOR PHOTO MAGAZINE FEATURING INTERVIEWS, ARTICLES AND COMICS CELEBRATING THE MANY LIVES OF THE LEGENDARY DOCTOR WHO!

ON SALE JANUARY 22



THE ADVENTURES OF SNAKE PLISSKIN

COVER BY DANIEL BRERRETON

LEN KAMINSKI/ROD WHIGHAM/STEPHEN BASKERVILLE

SNAKE IS BACK! THE HERO FROM THE CULT CLASSIC *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* AND THE RECENT HIT *ESCAPE FROM L.A.* STARS IN THIS ALL-NEW 32-PAGE ONE-SHOT! THE UNITED STATES POLICE FORCE DECLARES ALL-OUT WAR ON PUBLIC ENEMY #1, SNAKE PLISSKIN! AND THIS TIME, THEY AREN'T TAKING ANY CHANCES! NOW A KILLER CYBORG IS AFTER SNAKE'S SKIN, A TERMINATOR WHO KNOWS HIS EVERY MOVE, BECAUSE HE'S BASED ON SNAKE HIMSELF!

ON SALE JANUARY 2

STAR TREK®: VOYAGER™ NO.5

HOWARD WEINSTEIN/JESUS REDONDO/SERGIO MELIA

WHY IS THE CAMBROG PLANET STRIPPED BARREN OF ALL LIFE? AND EVEN IF NEELIX AND CHAKOTAY CAN SOLVE THAT MYSTERY, HOW CAN A DEFENSELESS VOYAGER SURVIVE AN ATTACK BY KAZON WARSHIPS? FIND OUT IN THE CONCLUDING CHAPTER OF "HOMEOSTASIS", WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF THREE STAR TREK *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLERS, HOWARD WEINSTEIN.

ON SALE JANUARY 8

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE® NO.5

MARIANO NICIEZA/TOM GRINDBERG/AL MILGROM

DS9'S PROMENADE IS BOMBED, SERIOUSLY INJURING MANY ONBOARD, INCLUDING GUL DUKAT'S DAUGHTER! WHO COULD BE BEHIND SUCH A COWARDLY TERRORIST ATTACK? IS IT THE CARDASSIAN GROUP KNOWN AS THE "TRUE WAY"? OR COULD IT BE A BAJORAN HATE GROUP? RIPPED FROM TODAY'S HEADLINES, HORROR STRIKES HOME IN THIS SHOCKING ISSUE!

ON SALE JANUARY 15

STAR TREK®: STARFLEET ACADEMY® NO.4

CHRIS COOPER/CHRIS RENAUD/ANDY LANNING

THE CADETS TAKE THEIR FIRST SPIN ON THE RUNABOUT, ONLY TO BE BOARDED BY A KLINGON BIRD OF PREY! THINGS DON'T GET BETTER WHEN COMMANDER ZUND IS WOUNDED AND BOTH SHIPS CRASH-LAND ON A STRANGE PLANET! PLUS: HOW DO PAVA AND KOVOLD KNOW ONE ANOTHER, AND WHY CAN'T THEY KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF EACH OTHER? FIND OUT IN THE ALL-NEW ADVENTURES OF THE FABLED INSTITUTION THAT SPAWNED EVERY *STARFLEET* OFFICER FROM PIKE TO PICARD!

ON SALE JANUARY 22

STAR TREK®: EARLY VOYAGES® NO.2

DAN ABNETT & IAN EDGINTON/PATRICK ZIRCHER/GREG ADAMS

CONTINUING THE ALL-NEW SERIES EXPLORING THE UNTOLD ADVENTURES OF THE U.S.S. ENTERPRISE™! CAPTAIN PIKE AND CREW RESPOND TO A DISTRESS SIGNAL FROM STARBASE 13, A PLACE WHERE DIRTY DEEDS ARE DONE DIRT CHEAP! THE STAKES RISE, HOWEVER, WHEN A DEPOSIT OF DILITHIUM IS FOUND NEARBY, A DEPOSIT SO PURE IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE REFINED- AND THE KLINGONS DECIDE THEY WANT IT WITHOUT PAYING!

STAR TREK® UNLIMITED NO.3

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FEATURING TWO TALES STARRING THE CREWS OF *STAR TREK* AND *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION®*! FIRST, THE NEXT GENERATION CREW FIND THEMSELVES CAST AS PAWNS IN A DEADLY CIVIL WAR! THEN, WHEN A WORMHOLE DISABLES A SHUTTLE, UHURA TAKES CONTROL! IT'S DOUBLE THE TREK IN THIS DOUBLE-SIZED ISSUE!

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SPIDER-MAN

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SILVER SURFER

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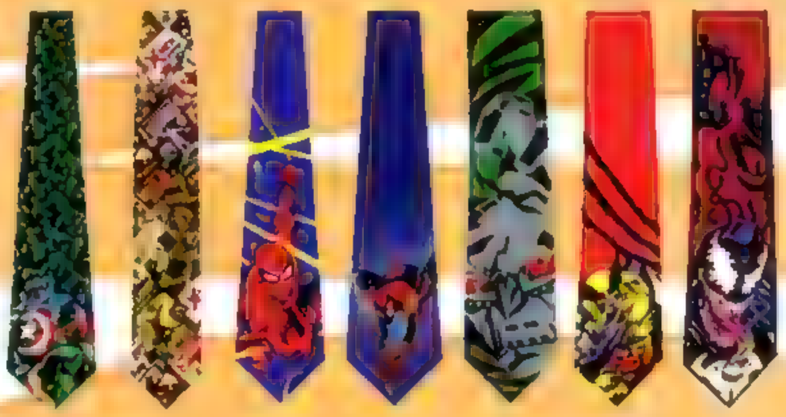

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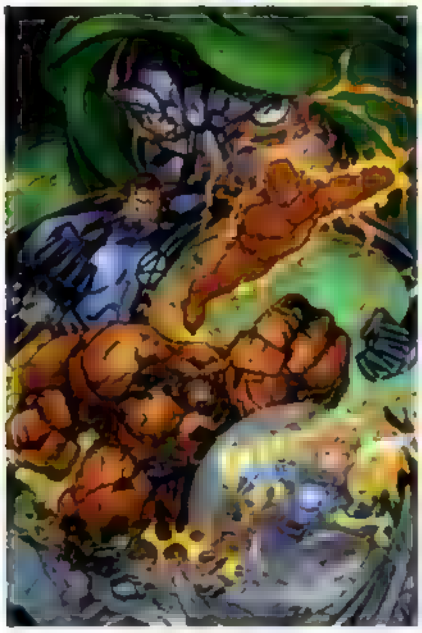

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SPIDER-MAN AND X-FACTOR SCRIBE HOWARD MACKIE
MARVEL MEMORIES WITH MARK BAGLEY
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LASER MACH

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OSP PUBLISHING

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203		Captain America Silk Tie	*
204		Classic Covers Silk Tie	*
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208		Venom Polyester Tie	*
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232		X-Men Jumbo Print T-Shirt #XXL	19.99
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235		Spider-Man Kidsize Tee #XL	13.99
236		Spider-Man Super-Jumbo Print T-Shirt #LG	16.99
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292		3in. D-Ring Baseball Binder (Case of 12)	*
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297		3in. D-Ring All-Sports Binder (Case of 12)	*
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